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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

5 stylish small gardens

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editor's letter

A small garden is typical of many a town or city house. The best of them can work as well for weekend lunches or gatherings of family friends as they do for daily escape. Often, we view our gardens as much from the house as we do from within the garden itself, so they have to work hard. In this issue, we share five small gardens with good ideas to take away. Simplicity of materials, strong design and a careful, if minimal, planting palette are some of the recurring themes.

Festina Lente, which translates from Latin as 'make haste slowly', is a nursery in the Netherlands that encourages picking flowers when you visit. Specialising in plants that are unusual, deliciously fragrant, late flowering or rare, you are as likely to come away with an armful of cut dahlias, crocosmia, cosmos and phlox for the house as you are with new plants for your garden. On page 86 we visit the nursery and discover the plants nurserywomen Esther Schonenberg and Joke Durieux recommend for August.

If you haven't already done so, make a note to sign up for the *Gardens Illustrated* newsletter. It's packed with even more planning ideas, expert advice and beautiful gardens. Sign up at gardensillustrated.com

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

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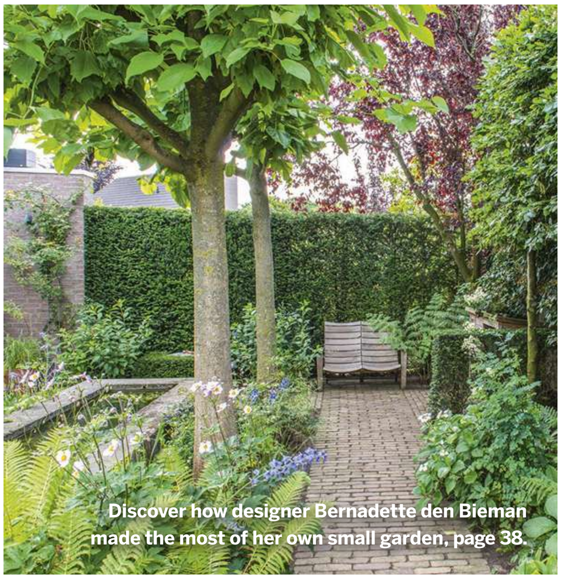
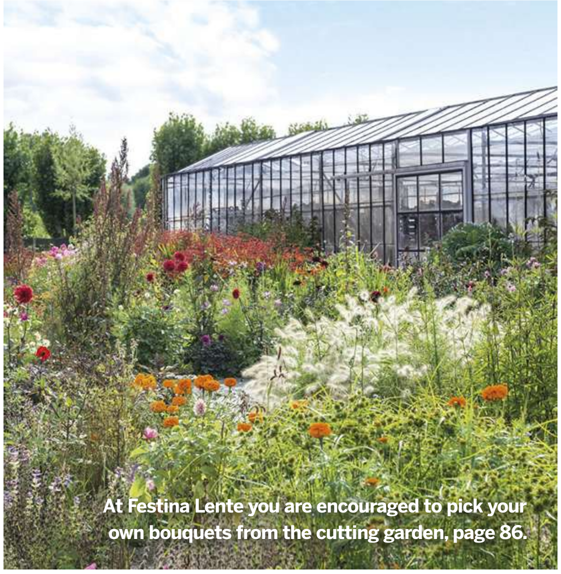
5 stylish small gardens
Agapanthus

Save money when you **subscribe to the digital edition** – see page 30



Discover how designer Bernadette den Bieman made the most of her own small garden, page 38.



At Festina Lente you are encouraged to pick your own bouquets from the cutting garden, page 86.

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MAAYKE DE RIDDER

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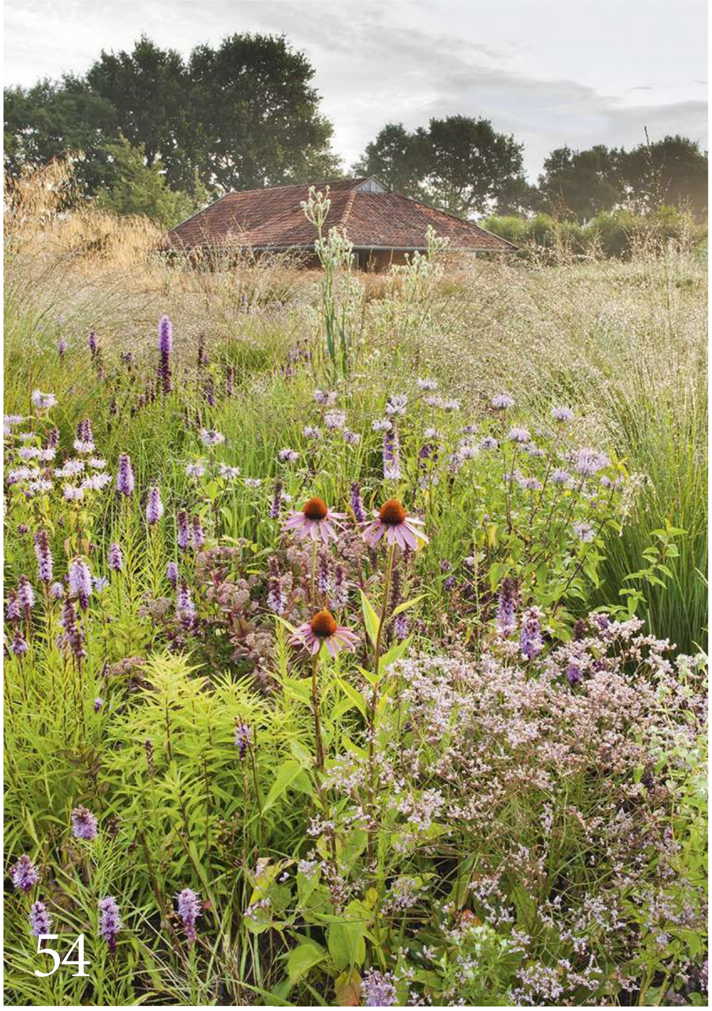

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Hélène De Witte's garden
Photograph by
Joanna Kossak / Gap Photos

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ROBERT MABIC, MAAYKE DE RIDDER

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strong focus on the culture of gardening. We find out what draws her in to her subjects

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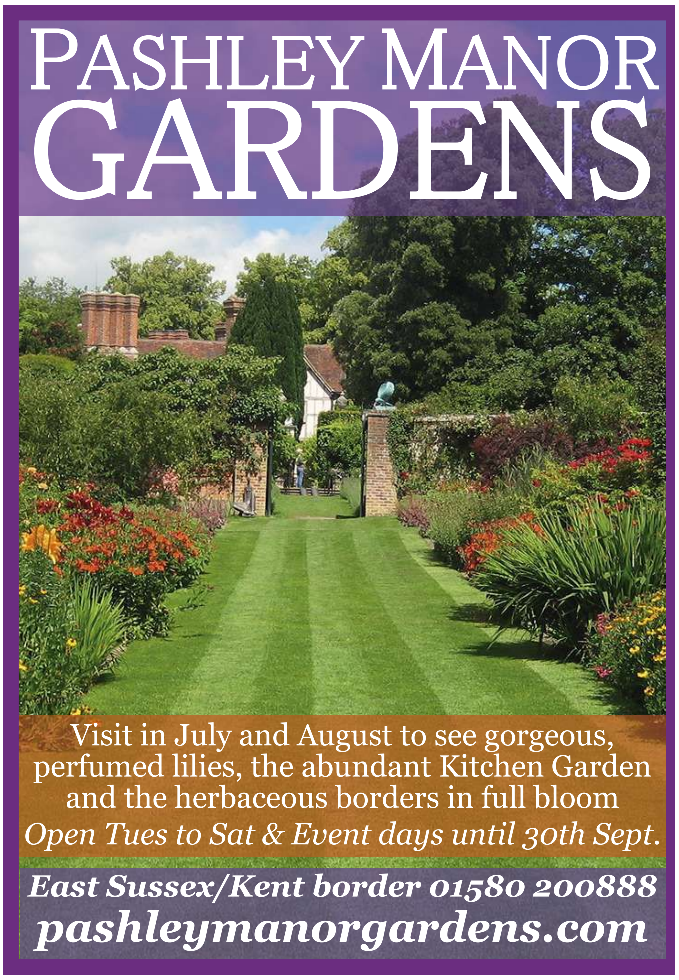
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SIMONE VAN HENINGEN

Since there is only so much she can do with her small balcony in The Hague, Simone loves visiting gardens up and down the Netherlands and abroad. She particularly enjoys writing about the beauty that can be achieved in small gardens, such as that of Bernadette den Bieman on page 38.

"Bernadette has succeeded in designing a garden that looks good all year, and is extremely practical."

ROBERT MABIC

Photographer Robert is always thankful when the light in the gardens he shoots is perfect, but he's even more grateful to the owners who put so much work into creating the lovely gardens in the first place. This issue he photographs two very different gardens on pages 54 and 80.

"I enjoyed meeting both Lianne and Joke – two very talented Dutch ladies with very different styles of gardening."

JODIE JONES

One time deputy editor of *Gardens Illustrated,* Jodie began a redesign of her own London garden last year and now spends all her free time either wielding a trowel or trawling nurseries for plants. She visits a clever London garden designed by Declan Buckley on page 34.

"The transformative power of good design never fails to impress, and what Declan has achieved in this garden is a case in point."

CAMILLA PHELPS

Camilla is a London-based gardener, writer and designer. She loves gardening in the city, and finds meeting other gardeners is always a fantastic opportunity to see how other people solve their gardening challenges. On page 42 she visits the garden of Hélène De Witte.

"It was fascinating to get an insight into Hélène's design process and see how she tackled the space in her London terrace."

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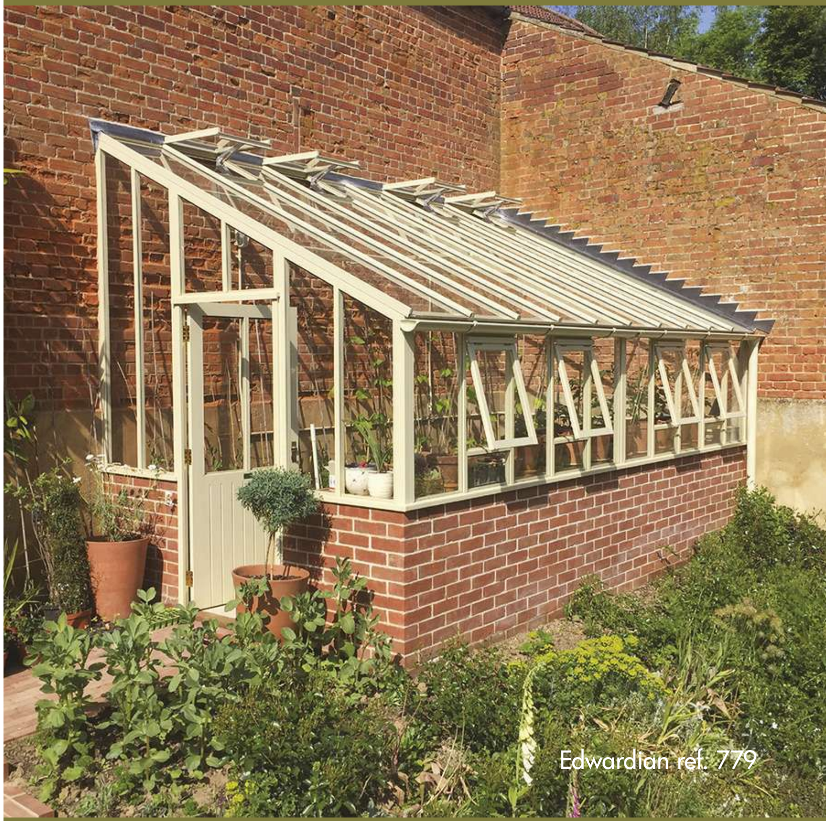

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Dig in

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

NEWS COMPILED BY ALYS HURN

GARDEN TO VISIT

Design inspiration

If you're looking for late-summer inspiration then the walled garden at Wildgoose Nursery in Shropshire, recently re-planted by owners Laura and Jack Willgoss, is a good start. The two-acre garden has been divided by hedging into a series of garden rooms, with a plum orchard, crab apple walk, vegetable and cut-flower garden, and a series of colour-themed ornamental areas, including a phlox walk, hot garden and floral meadow, to showcase many of the mainly British and northern European plants on sale in the nursery. The network of paths through the garden leads to a lovely tearoom next to the newly restored glasshouses. Open Friday to Sunday, 11am-4pm, until 15 October. The Walled Garden, Lower Millichope, Munslow, Shropshire SY7 9HE. **wildegoosenursery.co.uk**

OPEN DAY

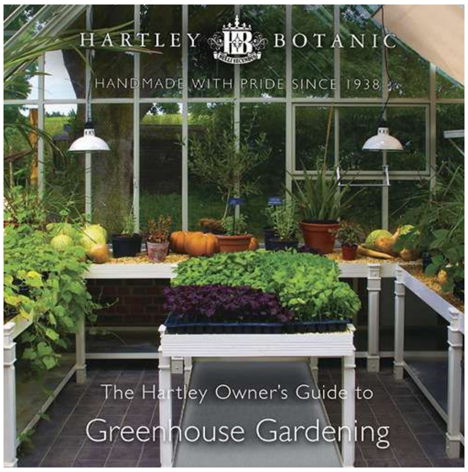
National treasures

To mark the end of its Agapanthus plant trial, RHS Garden Wisley is hosting an Agapanthus on show open day on 1 August. Presentations and talks from National Collection holders will take place throughout the day and visitors can find growing advice and information about the trials. There will be plants for sale from National Collection holder Fairweather's Garden Centre and the first 50 visitors will receive a complimentary 9cm plant. You can find a selection of the nursery's incredible agapanthus collection in our agapanthus feature on page 62. Normal garden entrance fee applies. rhs.org.uk

FREE GUIDE

A touch of glass

Make more of gardening under glass with a free, downloadable guide to greenhouse gardening from British greenhouse and glasshouse manufacturer Hartley Botanic. The guide, written by garden writer and presenter Nigel Colborn, has advice for buying a greenhouse, tips on how to grow ornamentals and vegetables, plus helpful suggestions to help you maintain your greenhouse and control common pests. **hartley-botanic.co.uk**



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PLANT HERO

Plant conservation charity Plant Heritage has given the prestigious Brickell Award, which recognises the vital plant conservation work of National Collection Holders, to Michael McIllmurray (seen on the right), who until recently held the National Plant Collection of the orchid genus *Maxillaria*. He was presented with the award by botanist Dr James Compton at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. **nccpg.com**

SEEDS TO SOW

Taste of Italy

Franchi
SEMENTI
SELEZIONE SPECIALE
CICORIA
ROSSA DI TREVISO (TARDIVA)

Think of Italian vegetables and you probably imagine the ripe tomatoes, peppers and aubergines that typify the cooking of southern Italy. But many northern areas have an alpine climate with the cooler temperatures that are ideal for growing red radicchio or chicory. This winter leaf, with a slightly bitter taste, is used extensively in Italian dishes, including soups, risottos and salads, and now is the time to sow seed. Paolo Arrigo, founder of seed supplier Franchi Seeds, recommends the radicchio from Treviso in the Veneto region of northern Italy. Franchi offers three radicchio di Treviso cultivars: 'Svelta', which you can harvest in November, 'Treviso 2 ' for December crops, and the highly prized 'Tardiva', a sweeter leaf that can be harvested right through to March. **seedsofitaly.com**

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Daylesford Organic Farm's new cutting garden will supply its garden shop and a series of floristry workshops.

WORKSHOPS

Business is blooming

Daylesford Organic Farm in Gloucestershire has expanded its market garden to introduce an organic cut-flower patch that will supply a new garden shop and a series of seasonal floristry workshops. More than 100 different kinds of plant, including 13 sweet pea cultivars, have been planted and new polytunnels added to protect delicate blooms from the British weather. Daylesford's floristry workshops run throughout the year and this month you can learn to create a stunning centrepiece for a summer garden party by booking on to the seasonal table arrangement workshop taking place on 2 August, 9.30am-1pm. The course costs £125 per person and includes light refreshments and all the materials you need. **daylesford.com**

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Boughton House in Northamptonshire, has beautiful 18th-century landscaped gardens and, as home to Kim Wilkie's landform work *Orpheus*, is still at the forefront of garden design. Throughout August it is celebrating 460 years of gardening on the estate with an exhibition *Vistas of Vast Extension*, featuring watercolours and maps that show the changing taste in gardens. Objects from the Duke of Buccleuch's collection, including some of the earliest books on gardening, will also be on display. The house is open 12-5pm each day and access to the exhibition is permitted with house and garden entry. Tickets from £6. **boughtonhouse.co.uk**

GOLD FINGERS

Serve up summer salads with these Ginkgo Salad Servers from MiaFleur. Made from brass, the gold-coloured servers will add a touch of glamour to the dinner table, and the ginkgo-inspired shape is ideal for picking out your favourite leaves. £39.95 a pair. Tel 0116 298 6393, miafleur.com

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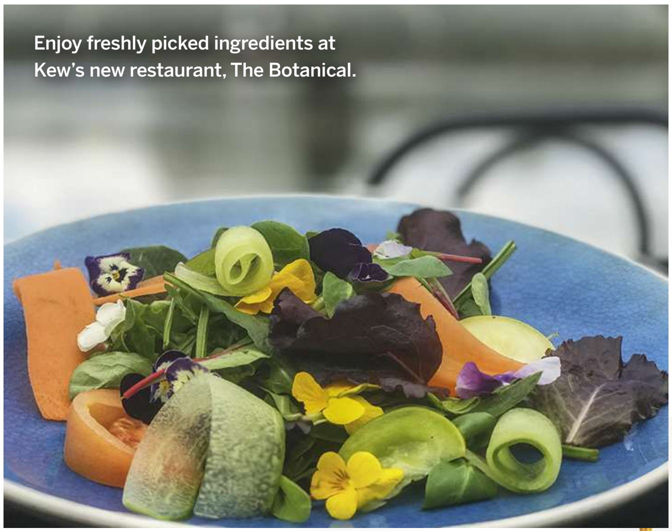
Diary

Learn how to make paper using garden plants at the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

- **A Landscape of Objects**
Explore a sculptural trail inspired by the landscape at Forde Abbey with work by artists including Annemarie O'Sullivan and Eleanor Lakelin. Until 27 October, 10am-4pm. Free with garden admission (£10). Forde Abbey, Chard, Somerset TA20 4LU. Tel 01460 220231, fordeabbey.co.uk
- **William Henry Hunt: Country People**
Discover some of the early works of British watercolourist William Henry Hunt, in an exhibition that brings together his watercolours depicting rural figures in their working environments. Until 17 September, 10am-6pm. From £7. The Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN. Tel 020 7848 2777, courtauld.ac.uk
- **Growing Winter Vegetables Workshop**
Learn about the crops you can grow over winter to keep your garden productive all year round. 3 August, 10am-4pm. Garden Organic, Ryton Gardens, Wolston Lane, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire CV8 3LG. Tel 024 7630 3517, gardenorganic.org.uk
- **Papermaking With Garden Plants**
Learn how to make your own sheets of paper using garden plants at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. 12 August, 10.30am-4.30pm. £35. Tel 01558 667150, botanicgarden.wales
- **Your Ultimate Guide to Gardening**
Pick up tips on a host of gardening topics, from growing fruit and veg to gardening on a budget, on this *Guardian* Masterclass with columnist Alys Fowler, self-taught gardener Hollie Newton and Charles Dowding. 20 August, 10am-4pm. £99 plus booking fee. The Guardian, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU. theguardian.com
- **Plant Lover's Day with Matthew Biggs**
A day of informal walks and talks hosted by plantsman and BBC *Gardeners' Question Time* regular Matthew Biggs as part of the Summer Sundays series at Barnsdale Gardens. 27 August, 12pm-4pm. Free with garden admission (£8.50). The Avenue, Exton, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 8AH. Tel 01572 813200, barnsdalegardens.co.uk



Enjoy freshly picked ingredients at Kew's new restaurant, The Botanical.

RESTAURANT

Feast for all the senses

The Botanical, a new table-service restaurant set in the heart of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, offers diners stunning views of the Palm House and across the lake, and a mouth-watering seasonal menu using fresh ingredients, many foraged from within the garden's walls. Open for brunch, lunch and afternoon tea, the seasonal menu will change regularly throughout the year and include delicious dishes, such as Hand-picked Kew Wild Garlic and Nettle Soup, and Botanical Garden Salad (above). Booking advised. Tel 020 8332 5155, **favouritetable.com**

POTTED ART

It can be tricky picking the right pot for your plant but a selection of artists taking part in the Pots for Plants exhibition at the Flow Gallery in London have let the plants do the talking and designed pots that are inspired by the textures, colours or geometry of a plant of their choosing. From hanging planters to stone sculptures, the possibilities are endless. Until 19 August, Tuesday to Saturday, 11am-6pm, flowgallery.co.uk

BRYAN COLLIS

Garden of delights

Explore 500 acres of sweeping parkland and formal gardens at Kent's Leeds Castle, and enjoy the blooms at the Festival of Flowers

Leeds Castle is a beautiful fairy-tale castle in the heart of Kent, surrounded by stunning grounds and gardens. Each of its beautifully laid out landscapes offers something different, from the Island garden, which evokes an ancient feel through the use of traditional flowers such as roses and lavenders, to the Barbican rockery, which boasts flora and fauna from around the world, from Turkish bulbs to Australian ferns.

Leeds Castle has been referred to as the "the loveliest castle in the world". If its majestic stone walls could speak they would tell a fascinating tale, rich with stories of the six Medieval Queens of England and notable families who have called this regal residence home.

From 23 to 28 September, the castle's grand state rooms will be adorned with beautiful floral creations on the theme of an 'Enchanted Castle'. Visitors will be amazed and inspired by incredible displays created by international award-winning florists and floral designers.

This is the fourth consecutive year of the popular Festival of Flowers at Leeds Castle, a modern reimagining of a tradition that's run since at least 1901. The last private owner of Leeds Castle, Lady Olive Baillie, was famous for her elaborate floral displays at society house parties in the 1930s attended by stars such as David Niven, Errol Flynn, Prince Edward and Wallace Simpson. Lady Baillie's love of flowers is kept alive by the floristry team today, in the form of their beautiful floral creations, which they also make for weddings and events every year.

The official opening of the Festival of Flowers will be hosted by English garden designer and television personality Joe Swift. During the event, visitors will be invited to join a programme of floral demonstrations, specialist talks and garden tours.

Leeds Castle is located near Maidstone in Kent just off Junction 8 of the M20, within easy reach of London. Grounds open at 10am daily and the castle is open from 10.30am. Admission to the Festival of Flowers is included in the general admission ticket. Tickets cost £24.90 for adults, £21.90 for concessions, £16.90 for children aged 4-16, and under 4s go free.

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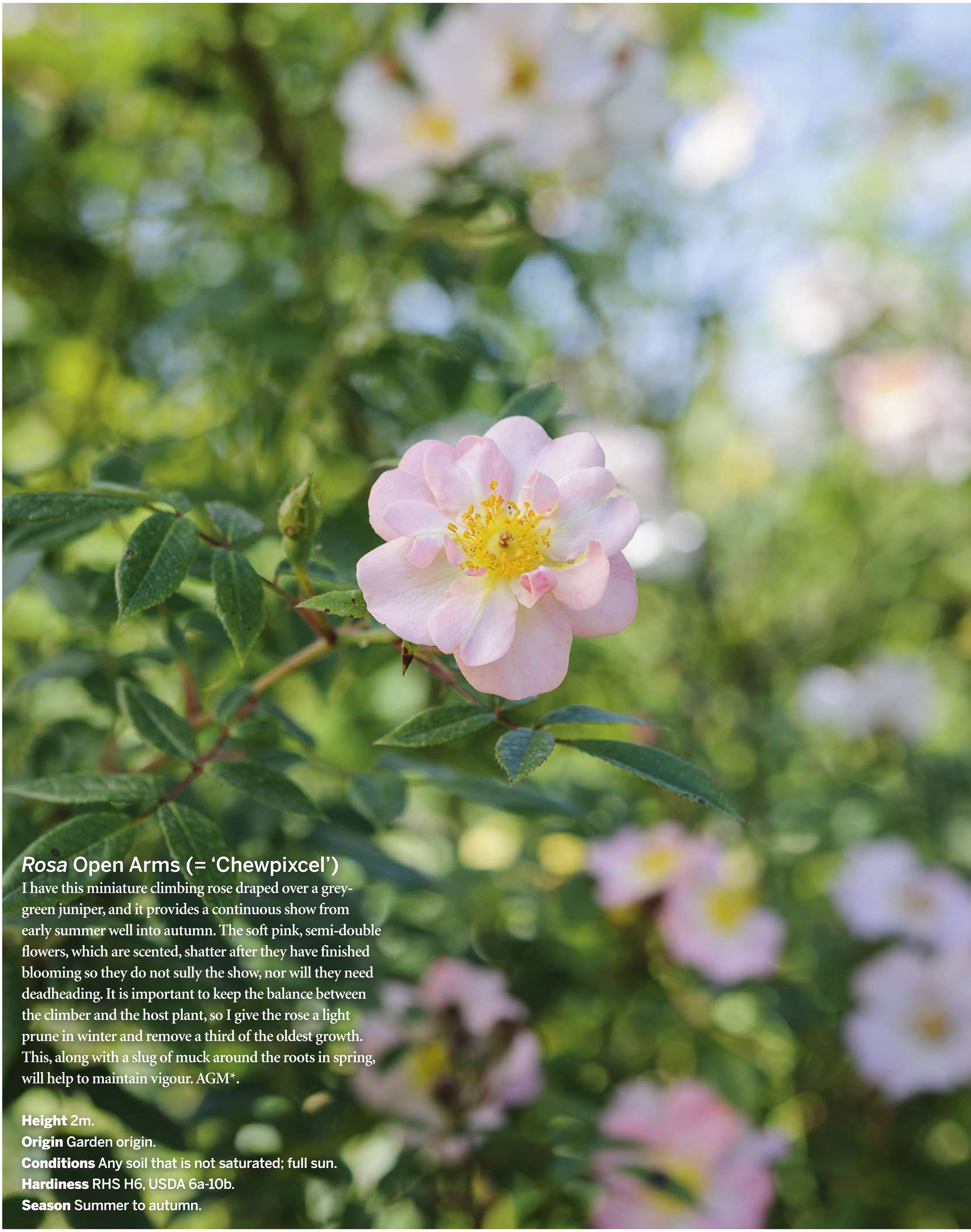


Rosa Open Arms (= 'Chewpixcel')

I have this miniature climbing rose draped over a grey-green juniper, and it provides a continuous show from early summer well into autumn. The soft pink, semi-double flowers, which are scented, shatter after they have finished blooming so they do not sully the show, nor will they need deadheading. It is important to keep the balance between the climber and the host plant, so I give the rose a light prune in winter and remove a third of the oldest growth. This, along with a slug of muck around the roots in spring, will help to maintain vigour. AGM*.

Height 2m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Any soil that is not saturated; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-10b.
Season Summer to autumn.

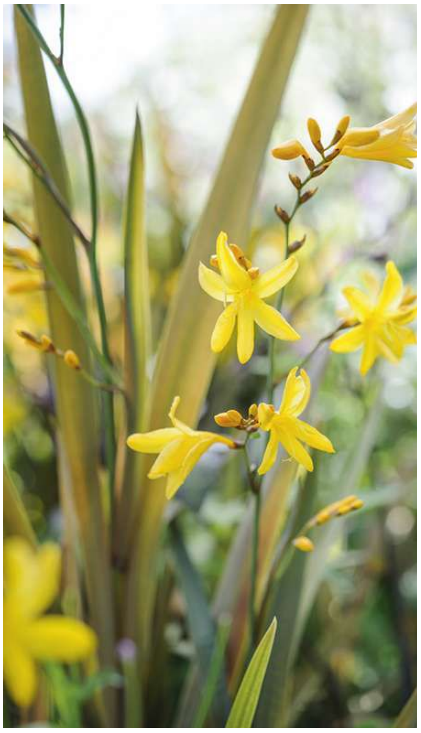
ANDREW MONTGOMERY

August plants

Bright oranges and reds add fire to Mat's borders this month, but their heat is tempered by airy umbels and grasses, and a friendly geranium

WORDS MAT REESE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Mat Reese
is head gardener at
Malverleys, a private
garden in Hampshire.



Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora 'Solfatare'

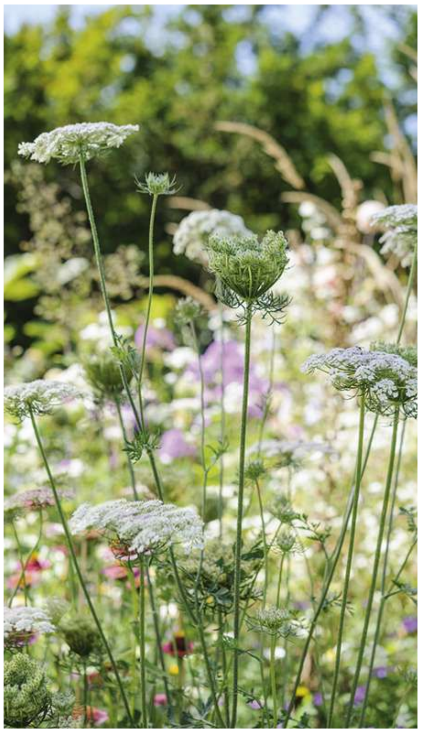
A plant that earns its keep in many ways. The foliage is a unique shade of coppery green, which, in combination with the vertical accent of the sword-shaped leaves, will contrast well with many other garden perennials. The flowers are a soft shade of yellow and are held just above the leaves on graceful, arching stems. Plant at the front of the border for best effect in rich, moist soil. This species can suffer in very cold winters and is best suited to warmer areas of the UK. AGM.

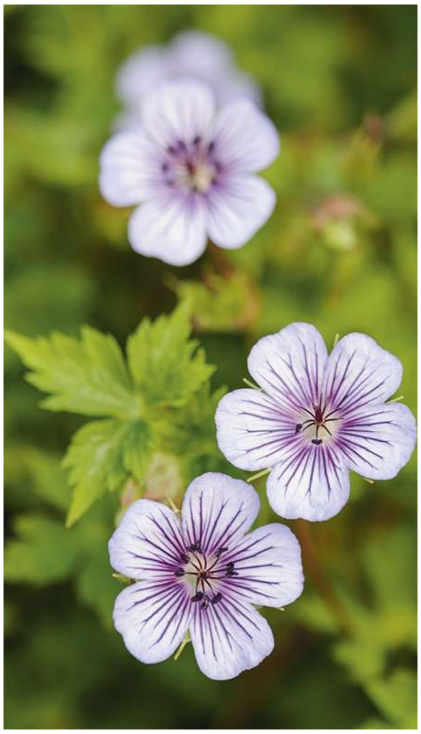
Height 50cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Any soil that is not saturated; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.
Season Summer.

Daucus carota

These wide-brimmed umbels float elegantly through the flower garden tapestry on long, thin stems and act as a wonderful antidote to the spires of veronicastrums or verbascums. There's a darker-claret wild carrot called *D. carota* 'Dara', which works well in combination with *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Antiquity', but this white-flowered form has more presence. Autumn-sown plants flower from June, while early spring sowings will flower in August, but because they have a tap root self-sown plants make the strongest specimens.

Height 1.4m.
Origin Europe and Asia.
Conditions Any soil that is not saturated; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 2a-11.
Season Summer.





Geranium wallichianum 'Crystal Lake'

Although slower to get going than many geraniums, this has to have one of the prettiest blooms of the geranium tribe. The flowers are a timid lilac in warm weather and become more blue when the weather is cool. Each bloom is decorated with purple striations and dark anthers. It will keep blooming well into the autumn and has a rambling habit, sending flowering stems up, over and through other plants. It does best near the front of the border next to plants that will complement its friendly manner.

Height 1m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Good garden soil; full sun to light shade but not too hot.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.
Season Summer to autumn.

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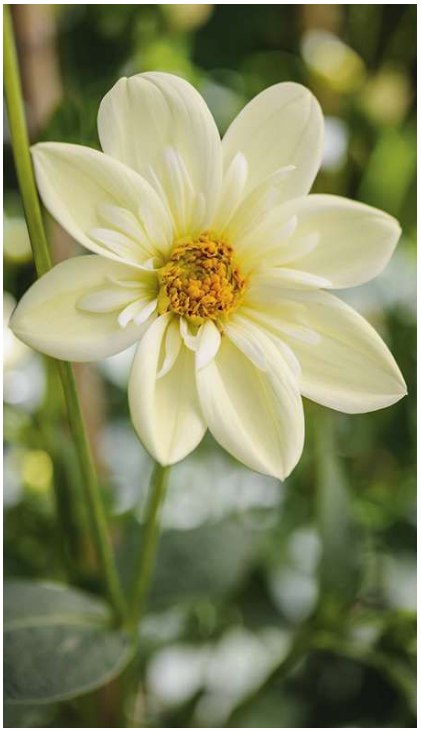
* Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.



Dahlia 'Clair de Lune'

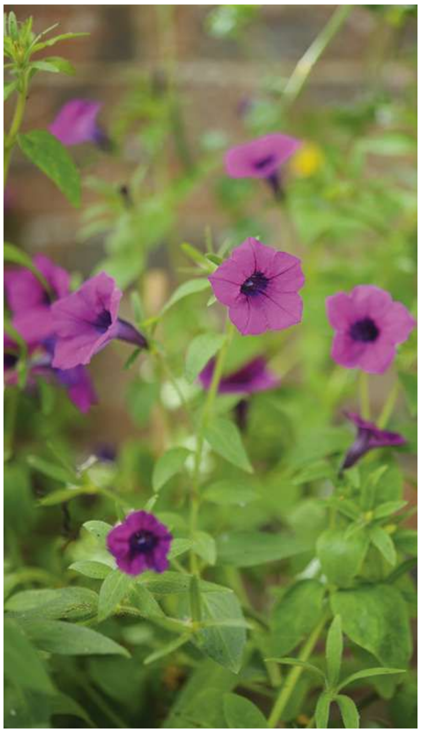
For those gardeners who find the blooms of dahlias a little uncomfortable in the flower garden, *Dahlia* 'Clair de Lune' might be worth considering. It has a voice, but does not shout. The soft yellow flowers are of the collarette type and are presented on strong stems well clear of the lush, green foliage. Tall, it does best with a stout cane positioned at the back of the plant with twine encircling the stems. Provide compost when planting, water and deadhead through the season and it will continue to flower into the autumn. AGM.

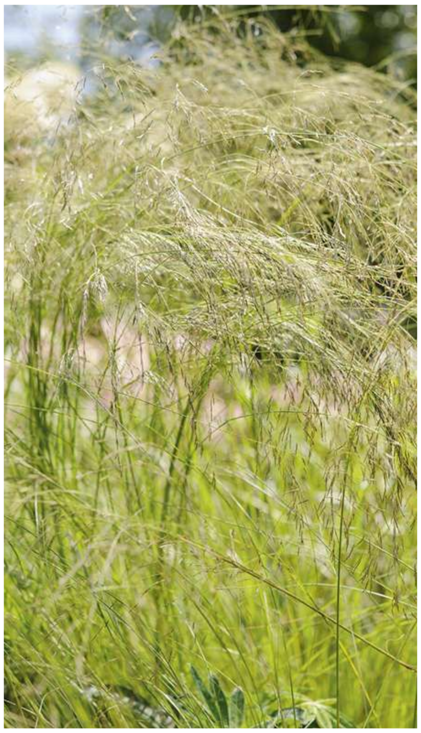
Height 2m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Any good garden soil with added compost; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 4a-9b.
Season Summer.

Petunia integrifolia

A far cry from the familiar trailing bedding petunias proffered in garden centres, this wild petunia with an enthusiastic scrambling habit and much smaller flowers will weave its way through shrubs and herbaceous plants. In a season it is capable of spreading 1m across as it travels through neighbouring plants. Vivid magenta blooms are produced in succession from late July well into the autumn. It performs best in light, warm soils and will appreciate the occasional feed through the summer (a dose of Growmore every four weeks will do). Sow seed in late May for planting in July.

Height 1m.
Origin Argentina.
Conditions Good moist soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season Summer to autumn.





Eragrostis curvula

The African love grass is a tussock-forming grass with fine green leaves and a lovely swishing habit. Airy, pale-fawn, arching panicles are produced from late summer and continue to look good into winter. Although not to my taste it would be a good grass for mass plantings. I prefer to contrast the flowing habit of grasses against more steadfast elements in the garden – a static plant, such as a shrub or small tree. Plant in light soil and sunshine and it will self-sow in the gravel or in cracks in paving. Give the plant a spruce up in spring by raking out the old leaves.

Height 1m.
Origin Southern and tropical Africa.
Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 6a-10a.
Season Summer.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

Cally Gardens.

GAP PHOTOS / FIONA LEA

One of the ultimate British destinations for any gardener is **Cally Gardens**. The late Michael Wickenden amassed one of the best collections of plants at Cally. Michael travelled extensively to source plants, sometimes from the remotest and most inaccessible regions of the world, but specimens were always carefully selected and sensitively collected. He also sourced plants from many other nurseries and gardens internationally. These collections form the heart of the garden. All is idyllically sited within a beautiful walled garden just outside of Gatehouse of Fleet. Cally Gardens, Gatehouse of Fleet, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire DG7 2DJ. Tel 01557 815029, callygardens.co.uk

After Cally you could continue west to **Logan**

Lobelia cardinalis 'Bee's Flame'

This perennial is one of the best reds for the garden, and the effect is all the better for the dark-bronze foliage. Its habit is quite narrow and upright, so put plants close together – cheek-by-jowl – to make a coherent display. 'Bee's Flame' is not reliably hardy and should be lifted and overwintered in a cold frame. Pot on in spring and plant out into soil improved with compost, as you would for late-summer bedding. Resents drying out and should be protected from slugs. A short cane might also be helpful.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Best in rich, moist soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 3a-9b.
Season Late summer.

Tropaeolum minus

Like its closest brother, *T. majus*, this plant is quick to flower from seed and will continue to send out scrambling shoots until it is lost to autumn frost. The yellow flowers are spotted orange and, as the name suggests, are slightly smaller than *T. majus*. They are also more wild looking and the petals more divided. The flowers are excellent in salads, the spurs are particularly sweet and peppery. Avoid the nuisance pollen beetle by picking flowers in bud. Treat as a hardy annual, and if left to set seed it will return every year in profusion; you will thin out more seedlings than you will ever keep.

Height 2m.
Origin Ecuador and Peru.
Conditions Any soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 2a-11.
Season Summer to autumn.

Dryopteris wallichiana

One of the stateliest hardy ferns for the garden. The show begins in the spring when the fern's crown hatches and the dark, hairy fiddleheads unfurl. From lovely chocolate-coloured rachis, individual leaflets expand and the frond is formed. The foliage grows and the plant becomes a dramatic funnel of drooping, mid-green fronds with vivid, dark mid ribs. For best results plant in good soil away from intense sunlight and cold winds. *Dryopteris* generally prefer drier soils and resent water logging. In winter remove the old fronds back to the crown. AGM.

Height 90cm.
Origin Himalayan Asia, South America, mountain woodlands in Mexico, Hawaii.
Conditions Any soil not saturated; shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.
Season Spring to autumn.

Botanic Gardens near Port Logan on the Rhins of Galloway, the southwestern tip of Scotland. The gardens have a wonderful and unique collection of plants that thrive in this sheltered coastal garden, bathed by Gulf Stream-warmed trade winds. Many plants grown here are quite exotic and are found nowhere else in the UK. Due to the mild climate it has a long growing season and looks good well into the winter. Logan Botanic Garden, Port Logan, nr Stranraer, Dumfries and Galloway DG9 9ND. Tel 01776 860231, rbge.org.uk/the-gardens/logan

A long way south, and over the border, is another extremely good nursery worth a visit – the family run **Dove Cottage Nursery** in Halifax. It holds an excellent and ever-evolving collection of plants comprised mostly of hardy perennials, but also sells a number of tender salvias and quality bedding. There is a small garden attached to the nursery, which is where plants and combinations are trialled, and it is one of the nicest groups of plantings I have ever seen. Dove Cottage Nursery and Garden, Shibden Hall Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 9XA. Tel 01422 203553, dovecottagenursery.co.uk

Dove Cottage Nursery

GAP PHOTOS / SUZIE GIBBONS

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IN THE GARDEN

Although she's often absent from her allotment during August, Jojo still finds time to do a few essential jobs, such as sowing turnips and green manures

WORDS **JOJO TULLOH** ILLUSTRATIONS **SARAH YOUNG**

In my gardening notebooks of the past 15 years, the pages marked with entries for August are shamefully infrequent. School holidays often make it hard for me to give the allotment the attention it needs. Much as I'd like to enter something into the annual produce show, we always seem to be away. Moorland camping and wide Devon beaches beckon, so after writing, the allotment comes a rather shabby third. Any references that do pop up usually record remedial actions taken after enforced absence: armloads of weeds collected; or vast marrows discovered lurking, like beached whales, beneath mildewed leaves. I've taken to growing my most perishable crops – such as tomatoes – in the flower beds and on the flat roofs of our house, instead. Then, whoever has stayed at home to feed the cats, reaps the benefits of home-grown tomatoes and chilli peppers, and they don't go to waste.

During the visits I do make (to check on the girth of the giant pumpkin we are growing on the compost heap, pick a rhubarb-leaf's worth of raspberries or a colander of green beans), I look out for a shady spot to sow a few turnips for winter eating. Like sorrel, turnips tolerate a little shade, so make a good town garden crop. Franchi Seeds (seedsofitaly.com) has a very pretty violet and white turnip from Milan, listed encouragingly as 'Easy Turnip'. The turnips are small and crunchy and can be eaten raw with salt, like radishes. The Real Seed Catalogue (realseeds.co.uk) offers several, including the very attractive-sounding 'Navet de Nancy', a classic French turnip, regular in shape, with a bright violet-pink top. Its leaves can be cooked like spinach, so it doubles up as a winter green. It's worth noting that while not all turnip tops are tasty, these ones are. Real Seeds' other popular turnip is 'Petrowski', a yellow cultivar from Poland with a sweet and mild flavour. When diced, it makes a good ingredient alongside carrot and potato in root vegetable pasties, and its leaves are tasty too. Not only does this cultivar do well from a late-summer sowing, but it also tolerates wet and cold conditions, so can be eaten right through the winter, and is suitable for growing on more exposed sites. Now is also the time to lift main crop potatoes, which will leave you with bare earth. Before the weeds spring up, sow some green manures. As well as suppressing weeds, they stop the soil getting washed away and when dug in, add nutrients. I usually sow either red clover or mustard, as the Italian rye grass I planted six years ago, proved hard to dig in.

WHAT TO DO NOW

If you have a large crop of beans, such as borlotti, haricot, or in my case the pole bean 'Cherokee Trail of Tears', leave some on the plant to dry and harvest at the end of the season. If the weather is wet, you can pull up the whole plant and hang it up to dry in an airy shed or garage. When the pods are hard and brittle, slip the beans out of their skins and store in a jar for winter use, or save to sow next year. I try and save a few chicory or rocket plants to hang up in the same way. The other job to make take time for is pruning stone fruit trees, such as plums and greengages. You should aim to remove any dead wood or crossed branches and shape the trees into a broad-based pyramid. Be ruthless and cut back any vigorous shoots at the top of the tree.

IN THE KITCHEN

A harvest of fresh, red chilli peppers puts Jojo in mind of Indian and Indonesian food, making August the right time to turn up the heat

As we have reached the height of summer, my theme this month is heat. The flickering light of a campfire is one of my favourite holiday sights and I love cooking food on an open fire. It doesn't have to be a complicated hearth, a simple circle of stones and a fire of foraged branches can be as effective as the most high-tech barbecue. I have various contraptions I use to cook outdoors, including an iron skillet and a double-sided grill with a long handle to make flipping fish and chicken easy. To make life simple, marinade your meat the night before you go and pack everything into a cool box. A slowly steaming pan of sticky rice on the side will help mop up the juices. A cob of sweetcorn, its papery skin left on, is first wetted and then seared over a hot fire. Serve with a little pan of melted butter, adding the juice of half a lemon, a pinch or two of cayenne pepper, and a grinding of black pepper, to make a sublime opener to the meal. Chillies provide the rest of the heat, with the relishes in the recipes below making great accompaniments to an outdoor meal.

RECIPES

In a season that should be hot and sultry, ransacking the spice cabinet seems like the right thing to do. Added to which, if you've grown your own chilli peppers, you might be wondering what to do with them. The chilli-heavy cuisines of India and Indonesia are a good match for this month's crops. Sambal is a fiery relish from Indonesia that can be served with rice, pulses, grilled fish or chicken. Tamarind paste can be bought, but is easy to make. Place a walnut-sized piece of dried tamarind pulp in a bowl and pour over boiling water to cover. After 15 minutes, rub the mixture through a sieve, scraping the bottom with a knife to get as much of the paste as possible.

Tomato and tamarind sambal

- **2tbsp vegetable oil**
- **500g ripe, peeled tomatoes, chopped**
- **2tbsp red chillies, deseeded and chopped**
- **½tsp cayenne pepper**
- **2tbsp tamarind paste (see above)**
- **Pinch salt**
- **Pinch sugar**

Heat the vegetable oil in a pan. Add the tomatoes and cook for 10 minutes or until they start to break down. Add the chillies along with the cayenne pepper, tamarind paste and a good pinch of salt and sugar. Cook for five more minutes, then eat at room temperature.

Coconut chilli sambal

A small bowl of this alongside dahl, turns an ordinary lunch into something special.

- **½ fresh coconut, finely grated**
- **2 fresh red chillies, deseeded and sliced**
- **1 garlic clove, smashed**
- **2 small shallots, thinly sliced**
- **Juice of ½ lime**
- **Pinch salt**
- **Sugar to taste**

Take the flesh from the coconut and grate to get 100g. Place the chillies, garlic and shallots in a pestle and grind to a paste. Add the lime juice, a pinch of salt, and a little sugar to taste. Stir in the coconut. Leave to let the flavours mingle, then serve.

Tomato rasam

Tomato rasam, or pepper water, is a spicy Indian soup to be eaten with rice or alongside dry curries. Serves four as a side dish, or two with rice.

- **1tbsp olive oil**
- **4 large, ripe tomatoes, chopped**
- **2 garlic cloves**
- **1tbsp fresh ginger, peeled and grated**
- **1tsp cumin seeds**
- **½tsp black peppercorns**
- **½tsp turmeric**
- **1tsp mustard seeds**
- **10 fresh curry leaves**
- **1 medium onion, finely sliced**
- **4 fresh red chillies, deseeded and sliced**
- **2tbsp tamarind paste**
- **200ml water**
- **3tbsp fresh, chopped coriander**
- **Salt to taste**

Blend together the tomatoes, garlic and ginger. In a pestle grind the cumin and peppercorns, add the turmeric and set aside. Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the mustard seeds. When they start to pop add the curry leaves, onion and chillies. When the onion has browned, add the ground and dried spices, stir for one minute, then add the tamarind paste (see above left) and tomato mixture. Add the water (you should end up with a watery-looking soup) and cook for 10-15 minutes. Add salt to taste and stir in the fresh coriander before serving. □

Correction In the recipe for Gooseberry' Muscat' Jelly [issue 248,page 28], the elderflowers should be added to the gooseberries before straining, and the sugar to the strained juice. See gardensillustrated.com for full, corrected recipe.

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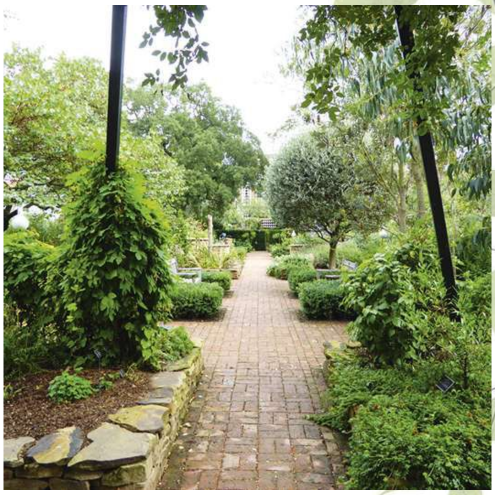
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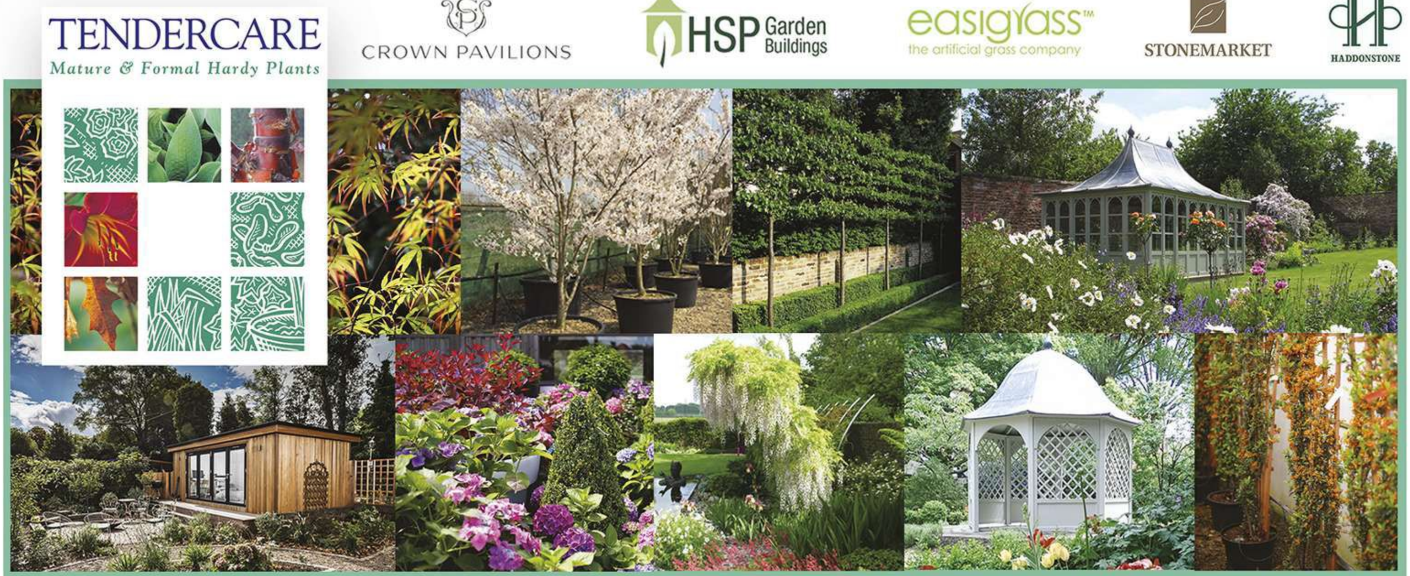

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Paul Smith

As head gardener at Scampston Hall in North Yorkshire, Paul is responsible for both the award-winning Piet Oudolf-designed Walled Garden and the 'Capability' Brown landscape

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory When I was about eight years old I had my own garden 'patch' in my parents' garden. I raised some annuals from seed and spent a summer feeling very pleased with my new border.

Horticultural hero As a teenager I would read books by plantsmen such as Alan Bloom; the enthusiasm for plants was captivating.

Favourite garden Hidcote Manor – the Arts and Crafts garden with its individual rooms is a fascinating design.

Worthwhile tip for every gardener Remember gardens are mini eco systems – give the whole of nature a chance to work before reaching for any chemicals.

Most valuable training I have had a lot of training along the way but I feel the best advice has always come from the older, more experienced gardeners. But you do have to ask nicely!

Unsung hero of the plant world *Disporum* – I love these delicate woodlanders and think they should be used more.

What principles have guided your attitude to gardening? I have always thought that gardens should be enjoyable. Both for the gardener working the garden and for the visitor viewing the garden. If it isn't enjoyable then you are probably doing it wrong.

What heartens you about attitudes to horticulture today? I think we are a lot more careful about the whole garden environment these days.

And the biggest challenge facing gardeners today Garden teams seem to be smaller than they once were.

Favourite gardening books Piet Oudolf and Noel Kingsbury's *Planting: A New Perspective*. Working at Scampston, with its Oudolf-designed Walled Garden, this is a really critical text.

What's the next big project you'll be tackling in the garden? We have a long border running down three sides of the walled garden here called the Plantsman's Walk. Later this year we intend to add yet more planting to this ever-growing plant collection.

Most embarrassing gardening moment I once mixed up some labels and planted some hot-pink tulips in a white border.

Contact gardens@scampston.co.uk

Scampston Hall is open Tuesday to Sunday (plus Bank Holiday Mondays) until end of October. Scampston Hall, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 8NG. Tel 01944 759111, scampston.co.uk

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At first sight Joke Kuiperij's garden seems the epitome of a cottage garden but beyond the chestnut fencing this artfully managed delight is a surprising mixture of styles

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Small gardens

Five small gardens – from urban plots to a suburban courtyard – that offer plenty of design and planting inspiration to help you maximise your space

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A simple grid of planting creates impact **page 34**

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Strong sight lines create the illusion of space **page 38**

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Provence comes to Kent in a stylish courtyard **page 46**

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MAAYKE DE RIDDER, RACHEL WARNE

This sloping garden has been transformed by giving most of the space over to one huge, tiered bed divided into contrasting blocks. At the front, low-growing *Vinca minor*, dotted with *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum', contrasts with loose mounds of *Hakonechloa macra.*

Divide and conquer

Using a strong geometric grid to divide the planting, designer Declan Buckley has transformed a sloping patch of scruffy grass into a dynamic garden full of year-round interest

WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**

When you remove the back wall from your house and replace it with glass, it makes sense to take some trouble with the garden outside. And if that garden is just a small patch of grass, sloping down to the house on two planes, it makes sense to call in garden designer Declan Buckley.

Declan has produced many gardens on many scales in the decades he has been in business, but he is particularly well known for his stylish solutions for problematic small town gardens, so he wasn't in the slightest phased when he first visited this tiny plot in Dulwich, southeast London. "I did what I always do, which is to look out from the house. I stand in every window that has a view of the garden, and that is how the design takes shape."

His client loved sculptural plants, didn't want to 'waste' space on a lawn, but was keen to have a decent area for socialising. Bearing this in mind, Declan first carved out a generous terrace decked in Millboard, a reclaimed composite that has great slip-resistance and blends seamlessly with the oak floorboards of the interior. On the garden side he edged the terrace with a box bench in the same material, constructed with a shadow gap so it seems to float off the ground, then laid out a grid pattern of generous beds, retained by chunky ebony-stained oak timbers as they rose up the slope. "It was a relatively inexpensive way of dealing with the change in levels, and it ▷

KEY ELEMENTS

What Small town garden.

Where Southeast London.

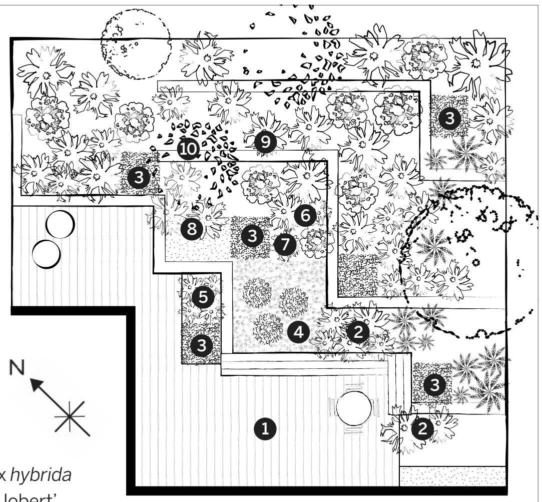
Soil London clay, much improved.

Size 14 x 13m.

Aspect Northwest facing.

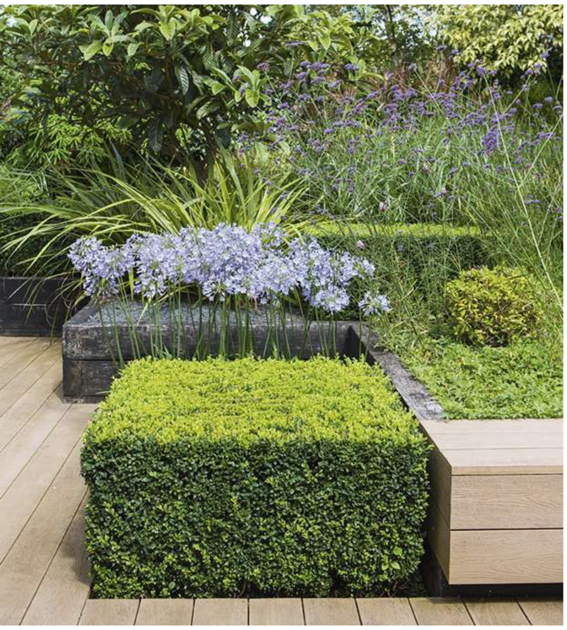
Special features Surprisingly, sunny and open sloping site, transformed with a strong geometric design.

Designed by Declan Buckley (buckleydesignassociates.com).



1 Millboard decking
2 *Hakonechloa macra*
3 Box cube
4 *Vinca minor*
5 *Agapanthus praecox*
6 *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'
7 *Verbena bonariensis* 'Lollipop'
8 *Astelia nervosa*
9 *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Emmanuel Lepage'
10 *Eriobotrya japonica*

PLAN BY LIAM McAULEY



Designing a small garden

Declan Buckley's five top tips for putting together a small garden planting plan

1 First think about what the garden will look like in winter. You want a fair proportion of strong evergreen elements, through which you can weave some seasonal interest.

2 Don't forget your vertical surfaces. When you don't have much ground, walls give you extra space for plants, and blur the boundaries, which makes the garden seem bigger than it really is.

3 In a small garden it's important to think big. Beware the temptation to sprinkle beds with lots of different plants. Really generous groups of your chosen plants will have far more impact.

4 Don't be afraid to use really tall plants. Your garden will automatically look larger if you can't see it all at once. A lot of my clients have a hard time believing me when I tell them that at the planning stage, but they all agree when they see their finished garden.

5 *Euonymus alatus* 'Macrophyllus' is a resilient alternative to box.Plant 1 litre pots at roughly five plants per linear metre and you should get a good-looking cube within a couple of years.

▷ works really well with the geometry of the house," he says.

This strong geometrical element continues with the planting plan, which is based on a series of interlocking squares and rectangles, each planted with a block of a single species. "The house is a 1960s' bungalow with a contemporary interior, so it was important to echo that with the structural planting," says Declan. "And we had our pick of the plants, because the site is unusually sunny for a London garden."

Bold cubes of clipped box are interspersed by blocks of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Emmanuel Lepage', *Astelia nervosa* and the underused *Libertia grandiflora*. Seasonal colour comes from a bed of *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer', another of *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert' and *Agapanthus praecox*. At the back of the garden, a large stand of *Euphorbia mellifera* has taken on the character of a tiny copse since the main stems were cleaned of leaves, in the same way you might with an amelanchier or a well-managed bamboo.

"I am keen on shaping plants," says Declan. "I think a lot of people don't realise how much you can do with a pair of secateurs and a good eye." A beautiful specimen *Eriobotrya japonica* part way up the garden has received its own stylish haircut, and is so happily at home that it looks set to fruit this year. "Everyone will tell you that they don't fruit in this country," says Declan. "But if you've got the right plant in the right place anything is possible." □

Facing page

Top Declan has used large blocks of single species, arranged in a geometric pattern to achieve maximum impact. Repeated cubes of neatly clipped box and blocks of evergreen foliage, such as the flax *Astelia nervosa*, ensure there is year-round interest, while plants, such as *Agapanthus praecox* and *Verbena bonariensis* 'Lollipop' provide seasonal bursts of colour.

Below left The garden's slope has been countered by dividing the generous border into three tiers, each retained by ebony-stained oak timbers.

Below right A new glass wall at the back of the house was the impetus for the garden redesign – and part inspiration for the grid layout. It now offers views of the stunning border with its mix of plants including *Polystichum setiferum*, *Hakonechloa macra* and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Emmanuel Lepage'.

This page

Top A pair of mid-century Solair chairs in turquoise plastic make a strong statement against dark-stained oak raised beds.

Middle Millboard decking provides a transition between house and garden and works well with the many textures, such as this *Polystichum setiferum* and the glossy ribbons of *Hakonechloa macra*.

Bottom A bench made from the same Millboard decking encloses the planting and offers additional seating. The shadow gap beneath makes it seem almost to float off the ground.

Private view

Bernadette den Bieman has created an intimate space that uses strong sight lines to create an illusion of space

WORDS **SIMONE VAN HEININGEN** PHOTOGRAPHS **MAAYKE DE RIDDER**

Garden designer Bernadette den Bieman's garden is typical of many Dutch houses – and so typical of the gardens of many of her clients.

She and her family moved to their newly built house in the Dutch town of Oss 25 years ago. At the time the garden was little more than a lawned area with a *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra' in the far corner, but at around 100 square metres – slightly larger than average for a Dutch garden – it was paradise for a young family but for one small thing: its lack of privacy. It is overlooked by surrounding houses that themselves offered a far from ideal view.

"A garden, wherever it is, should make you feel away from it all," says Bernadette, and so as soon as her children were old enough to lose the lawn she set to work creating her own private sancturary.

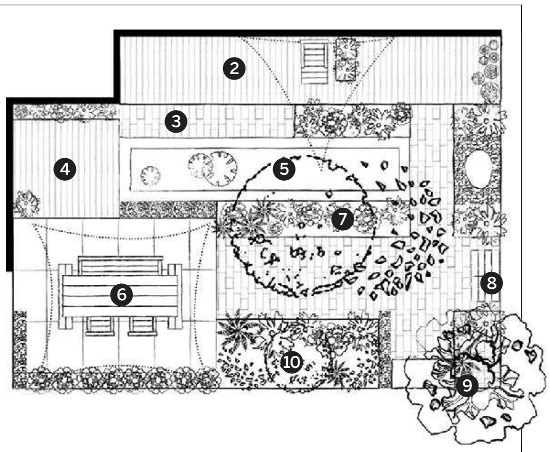
Her starting point was the sightlines from the L-shaped ground floor. "Face it, we spend more time inside looking at the garden than actually in it," says Bernadette. "And in a small garden there is no getting away from the house anyway."

From the living room window your eye is drawn by a long and narrow raised rill that cuts through the garden lengthways seeming to lengthen the garden. Its wide-edged rim is just the right height and width to provide additional seating, and with a large *Nymphaea alba* at one end it offers a calming focal point for Bernadette when

▷

KEY ELEMENTS

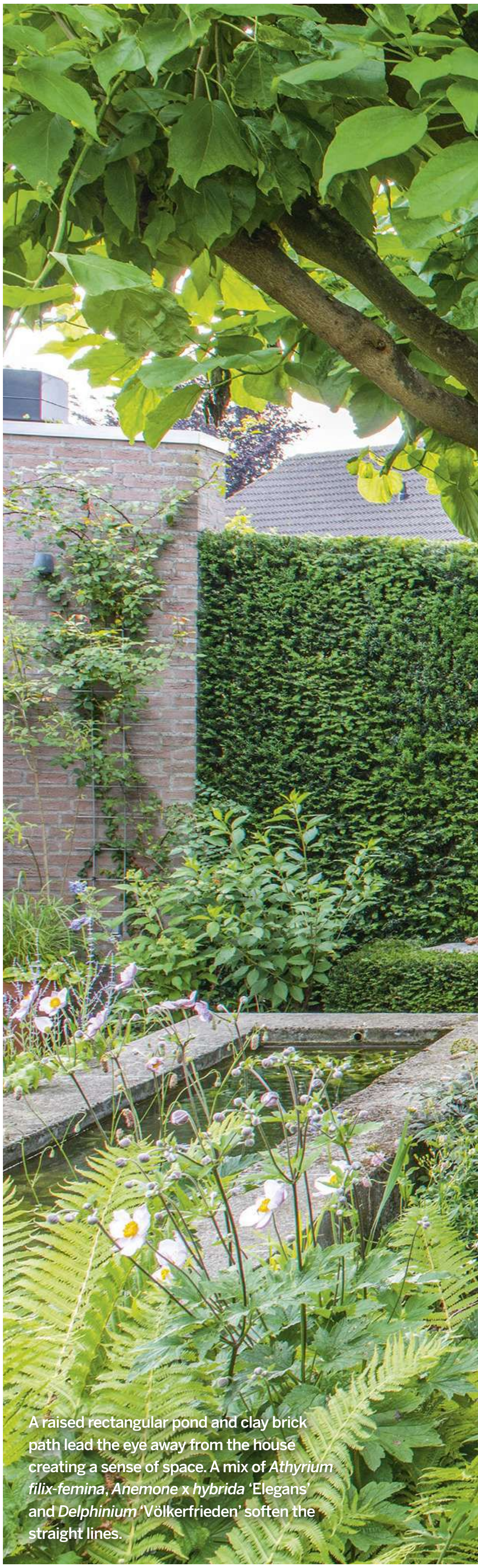
What Small suburban garden.
Where Oss, the Netherlands.
Soil Sandy.
Size 7 x 15m.
Aspect Southeast facing.
Special features A garden that uses strong geometrical lines for hedging and hard landscaping, which have been softened by planting. Raised rill. Pleached tree hedges. Emphasis on creating sight lines and privacy.
Designed by Owner Bernadette den Bieman (bernadettedenbieman.nl).



1 House
2 Decked terrace
3 Brick path
4 Decked terrace
5 Raised rill
6 Paved dining terrace
7 *Catalpa bignonioides*
8 Bench
9 *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra'
10 Pleached *Fagus sylvatica*

N

PLAN BY LIAM McAULEY


A raised rectangular pond and clay brick path lead the eye away from the house creating a sense of space. A mix of *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Anemone x hybrida* 'Elegans' and *Delphinium* 'Völkerfrieden' soften the straight lines.

Creating privacy in an overlooked garden

Bernadette's five top tips for making a small garden feel bigger and more private

1 Master the art of distraction A strong statement, such as a raised rill, a piece of sculpture or a tall specimen tree draws your eye away from surrounding buildings.

2 Surround your garden with neat boundaries – whether fences, brick walls or hedging – to create both privacy and a feeling of intimacy. Keeping them neat, with low planting beneath, increases your space at ground level.

3 Think vertically. Bernadette's pleached trees form a hedge on stilts that provides privacy without taking up room at ground level. Planting away from the boundary makes pruning easier and creates an added sense of depth.

4 Shade sails are a practical way to create extra shade – and privacy – and, unlike a cumbersome umbrella, won't clutter up ground or storage space.

5 Work with your neighbours when deciding on fences and hedges or selecting tall trees. Bernadette worked so well with her neighbours she ended up designing their garden.

▷ she's working in her office in the long leg of the L shape. Behind it a neatly shaped *Taxus baccata* hedge obscures the view from Bernadette's office to the small dining terrace, much to the relief of her children when they spent time there with friends. "Small hedges, such as these are just high enough to hide you when you are sitting down, but don't obstruct the view when you walk through the garden," says Bernadette.

She always recommends her clients invest in mature trees for instant privacy. She has opted for two *Catalpa bignonioides*, whose large, heart-shaped leaves provide shade and block the neighbours' views, and three *Fagus sylvatica* along the southern boundary. "Planting them away from the fence," she says, "adds depth, because the underplanting continues beyond the trunks."

While they provide privacy, these mature trees also block the sun, meaning most of Bernadette's plants are shade lovers. Ferns, such as *Osmunda regalis*, *Polystichum setiferum* 'Plumosomultilobum Densum' and *P. setiferum* 'Herrenhausen', along with *Hosta sieboldiana* var. *elegans*, provide the perfect backdrop for shade-tolerant *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Königin Charlotte', *Actaea simplex* 'Brunette' and *Aruncus dioicus*.

Lush planting helps to softens the garden's strong geometric lines. "I don't plant in groups," says Bernadette. "I prefer single plants recurring throughout a border. It's like flower arranging: you wouldn't want all your roses on one side of your bouquet." Whites, purples and blues dominate. "In a small garden, I recommend colours that recede rather than advance," says Bernadette. Practical advice from a practical designer, who knows all about the challenges of designing a small garden from personal experience. □

This page

Top Near the house a small terrace paved with Belgian bluestone offers a secluded space for the family to eat outdoors. Beyond it an archway covered by *Rosa* 'Bobbie James' hides a shed.

Middle A pink-flowered *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Elegans' in among other loose planting helps to soften the sharp lines of the rectangular-shaped rill.

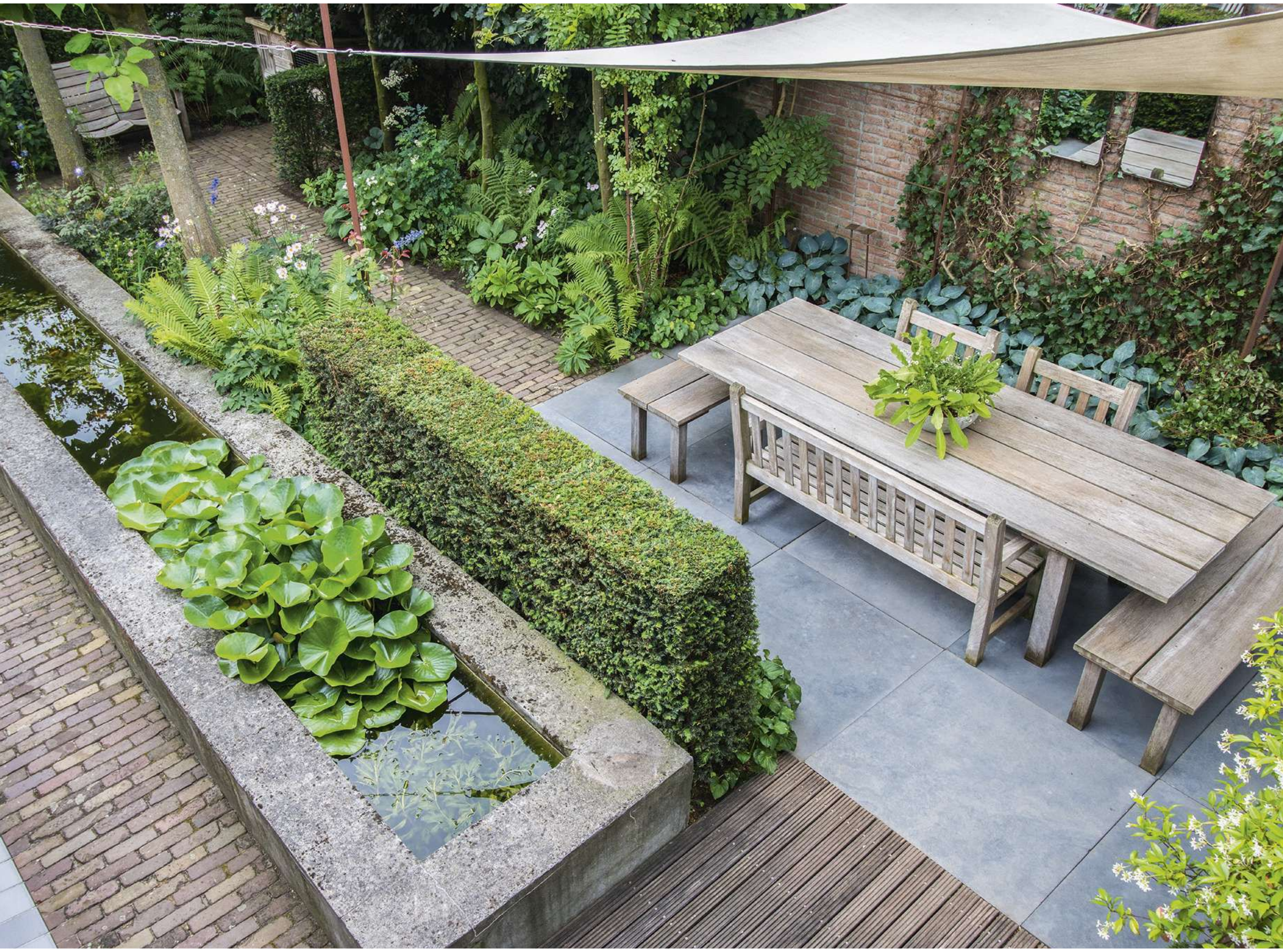
Bottom A shade sail attached to a metal frame for ease of use, helps keep the dining terrace cool and private. Another sail shades the decking area in front of Bernadette's office.

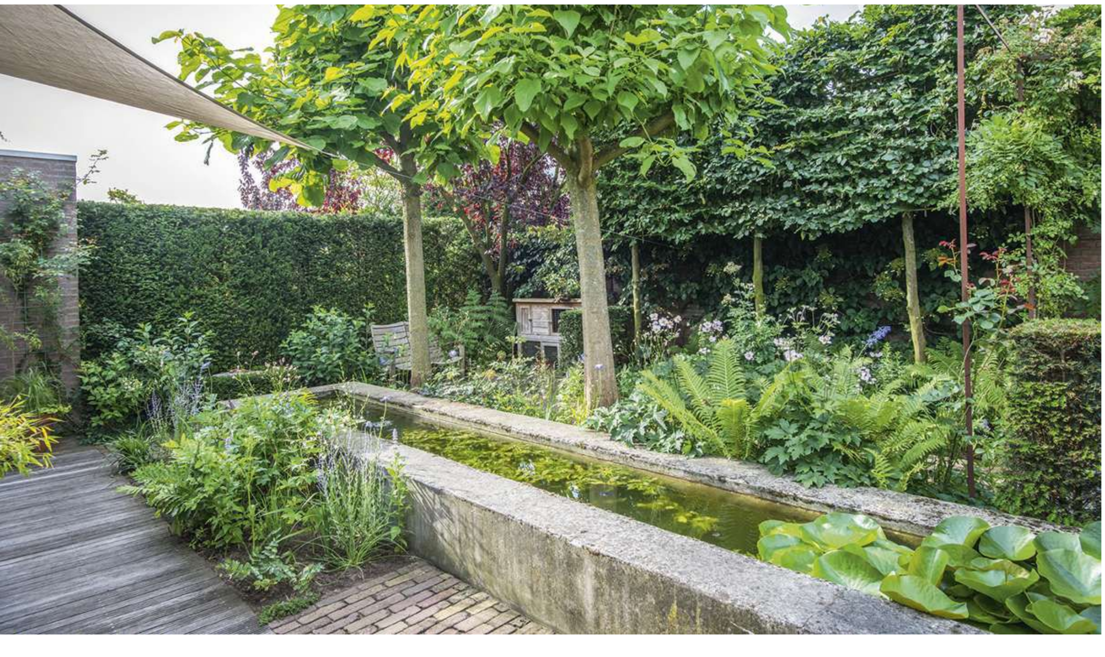
Facing page

Top Pale woods and paving help prevent the shady garden from seeming too dark. A mirror placed on a brick wall underplanted with shade-loving hostas helps reflect light and creates a feeling of depth.

Below left By positioning the decking planks and clay bricks in her paths perpendicular to the direction of her sight lines, Bernadette has created an illusion of width as well as length in the narrow garden.

Below right Rather than plant in groups, Bernadette prefers to single plants in artful displays, such as this airy mix that includes *Gaura lindheimeri*, *Sanguisorba* 'Pink Tanna' and *Perovskia* 'Little Spire'.





Blending in

In her own small, west London garden, designer Hélène De Witte has used a limited palette of hard-landscaping materials and plants to create a beautifully blended whole

WORDS CAMILLA PHELPS PHOTOGRAPHS JOANNA KOSSAK / GAP PHOTOS

When it came to planning her own garden, the starting point for designer Hélène De Witte, was the view through the house to the exterior.

From the moment you set foot inside the front door your gaze travels down the hall and straight through the floor-to-ceiling kitchen windows. Lured by the horizontal lines of the bespoke chestnut fencing, your eye settles comfortably amid the planting.

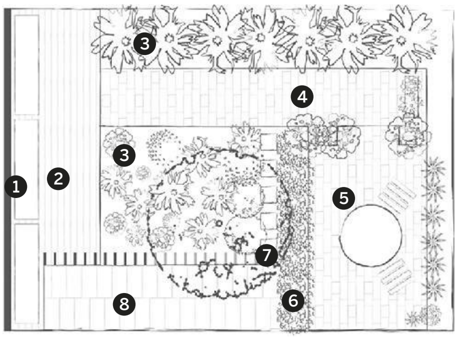
The garden is typical of many London terraced houses. It has the added challenge of backing on to the brick wall of a three-storey house that creates heavy shade and poor ventilation. Sacrificing the existing borders and small lawn was an easy decision for Hélène. But with three children under ten, she wanted a garden that worked for the whole family.

A former merchandiser for high-end fashion and interiors brands, Louis Vuitton, Ralph Lauren and Burberry, Hélène retrained as a garden designer with the London College of Garden Design and qualified in 2014. She started work on her garden in 2015 when the basement of her Victorian townhouse was being excavated. She worked closely with her architect and the landscapers, Landform, to make sure the garden offers both a physical and visual link between the basement and kitchen.

"I wanted a strong structure, but also to be able to play around with planting ▷

KEY ELEMENTS

What Small city garden.
Where West London.
Size 5 x 8m.
Soil London clay with added bonemeal and annual mulch.
Aspect South facing, but shade from surrounding buildings.
Special features A tight space that has been given an airy feel using a strong, contemporary geometric design, with fresh planting and a multi-stemmed tree. A clearly defined space that links upper level with basement and extension.
Designed by Owner Hélène De Witte (helenedewitte.com).



1 Light well
2 Iroko decking
3 Clay pavers path
4 *Libertia formosa*
5 Terrace
6 Hornbeam hedge
7 *Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Ballerina'
8 Steps down to basement

PLAN BY LIAM McAULEY

The contemporary looking sweet chestnut cladding on the extension is continued along the boundary fences linking house and garden, while the white flowers of *Libertia formosa* adds to the garden's modern fresh feel.

Hard landscaping in small gardens

Hélène De Witte's five tips for making the most of hard-landscaping materials

1 In a small garden hard landscaping provides you with continuous structure. "It should be hard and bold," says Hélène. "The planting is partly there for structure, but partly to soften the hard landscaping. But if you can only choose one plant, make it a tree."
2 Remember your hard landscape is there all the time. While you can always play around with the planting, hard landscaping forms a constant backdrop and is both more difficult and more costly to change. "Keep it simple when choosing materials," advises Hélène. "Use a maximum of three different types. And when you make your choice, make a bold statement."
3 You need unity not uniformity. Hélène has used a lot of wood for her house's interior and carried this through to the garden to create a feeling of unity between both spaces.
4 Boundaries are important and they need to work hard in a small garden. Try to create a balance between greening up your fences and walls and, where the materials you have used are features in themselves, making the most of their solid structure.
5 Even in a small garden there is room for secret spaces and exploration. In her own garden Hélène has used a hornbeam hedge to screen off a small, secluded terrace at the rear of the garden. This contrasts with the solid verticals of the iroko posts, which screen the alternate-tread staircase that leads down to the basement.

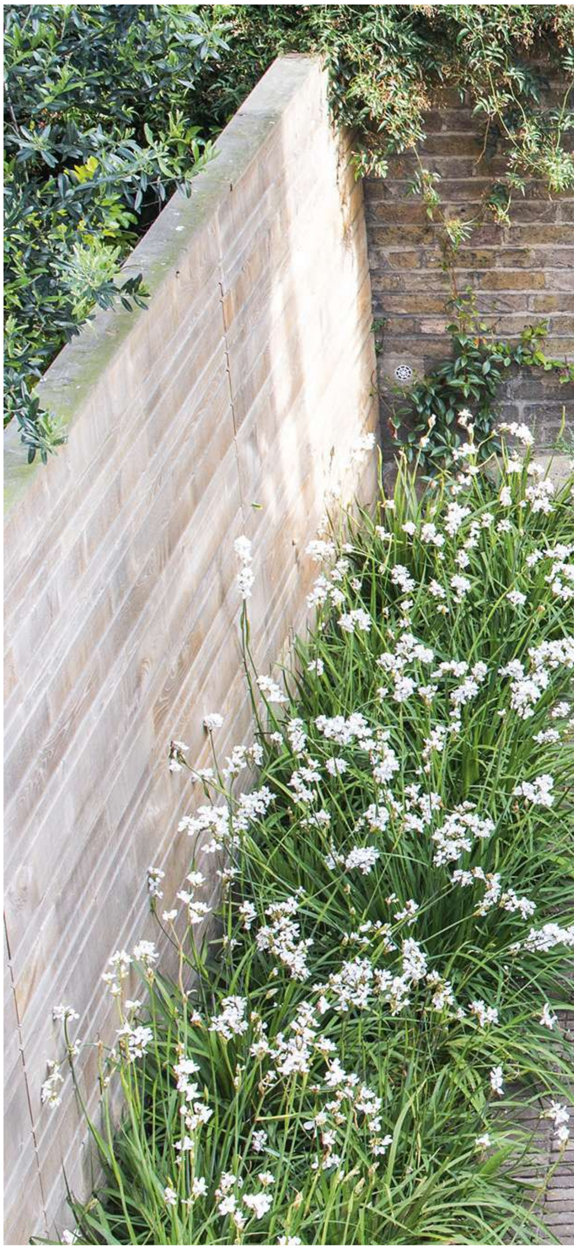
▷ associations," says Hélène. A multi-stemmed *Amelanchier* x *grandiflora* 'Ballerina' provides the garden with a soft focal point, and the gentle mix of evergreens and perennials, such as *Libertia formosa*, *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'JS Caliente' and *Thalictrum rochebrunianum*, are a foil for the brighter colours of seasonal bulbs. She tweaks these associations annually to ensure the planting both softens and contrasts with the hard landscaping that defines the space.

When you are outside and look back at the house, you realise the wooden cladding framing the windows and glazed door matches the fence exactly. It's a little like being in a wood-panelled room open to the skies.

"It was quite natural to extend what was happening on the house into the garden," explains Hélène. "We aligned the horizontal lines of the cladding with the horizontal lines on the fence."

This linear pattern sets the style for a design that is strong on geometry. The verticals and horizontals recur in the materials used and in the planting. From clay pavers to the iroko deck and iroko poles that form the sculptural 'balustrade' for the basement stairs, to the hornbeam hedge. Hélène repeats these patterns to create a simple rhythm as you view and move through the garden. The pathways make it family friendly too, giving the children places to hide and explore. "There is always something going on," says Hélène. "I know the garden as the view from the house, but when you are in it, it is its own space – it feels different depending on where you are."

What stands out overall is the quality and the simplicity of the materials and planting palette and how it all fits together. Each plant, each piece of wood or stone has been meticulously chosen and placed in such a way as to enhance its individual qualities. As Hélène says: "In a small garden like this, you are very close up and the beauty is in the detail." □



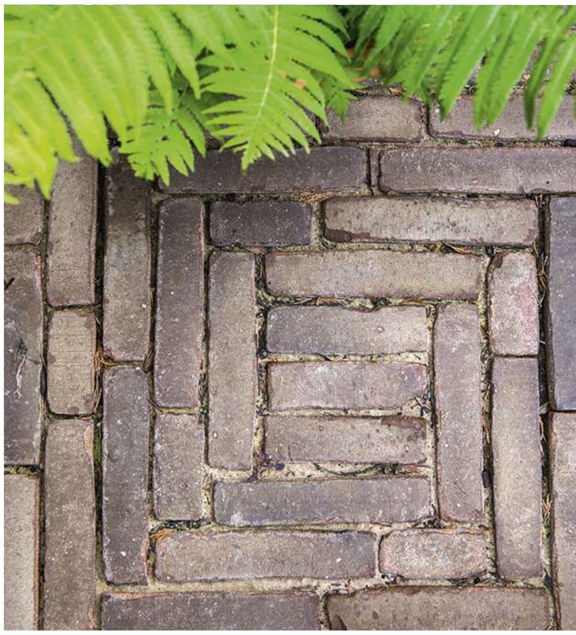
Top Clay pavers, used for the path and rear terrace, blend beautifully with the London brick of the rear wall, which will soon be clothed with *Trachelospermum jasminoides* and *Jasminum officinale*. In contrast the sleek, sweet chestnut fences on either side have been left bare.

Bottom row

Left White-flowered *Libertia formosa* borders the path leading to a secluded rear terrace. Its evergreen, strappy foliage provides a strong structure for contrasting planting through the season: *Tulipa* 'Ballerina', *Geranium* 'Johnson's Blue', *Penstemon* 'Raven' and asters.

Middle The flowers of *Dicentra* 'King of Hearts, grown in a pot with *Astilbe* Bridal Veil (x *arendsii*), brighten up a shady corner alongside the potted fern *Dryopteris filix-mas.*

Right These Ancienne Belgique clay pavers, from Belgian company Brickworks Vande Moortel (vandemoortel-bricksandpavers.com), were chosen for their naturally weathered look.



Savoir flair

Taking inspiration from her family's Provençal origins, Sophie de Bouvier de Cachard has turned her Kentish courtyard garden into a corner of southern France

WORDS FRANCINE RAYMOND PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

Just outside Canterbury, Sophie de Bouvier de Cachard has created an intimate courtyard garden: a stage set recalling her Provençal origins, with a backdrop of the Kent countryside rather than the sparkling Mediterranean. Her mother's family are from the south of France, so this is Sophie's heartland, and also the home of her gardening guru, the late Nicole de Vésian. And the book about her – *Modern Design in Provence* – is Sophie's bible.

De Vésian who worked as a designer for Hermes, retired to a village in Bonnieux and made a garden – La Louve, that has grown into a work of art. A study in very limited colour and form. Sophie describes it as: "A tableau of clipped balls, cones and evergreen pillars in greens and greys, interspersed with simple statuary in local stone that mimics the maquis shrubland with style and elegance."

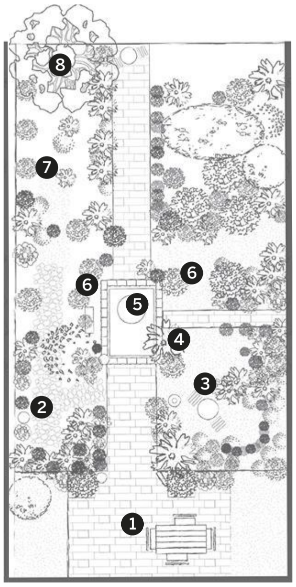
I wondered how such simplicity fared under English skies without the faded subtlety that lights the south of France, but it works: maybe because the space is small and light is diffused by the surrounding courtyard buildings, like an impeccably styled *mise-en-scène*. Most gardeners put up with the odd plant in the wrong place, usually for sentimental reasons, but in such a limited space, Sophie is brutally exact.

Originally home to giant tree ferns and a badly placed cypress that struggled in the rich loam, the garden boasted a weedy central lawn with broken paving. This has been ▷

KEY ELEMENTS

What Courtyard garden.
Where Wingham, near Canterbury, Kent.
Soil Well-worked rich loam.
Size 10 x 20m.
Aspect West facing.
Special features Central pond surrounded by raised and flat beds inspired by Provençal maquis planting.
Designed by Owner Sophie de Bouvier de Cachard.

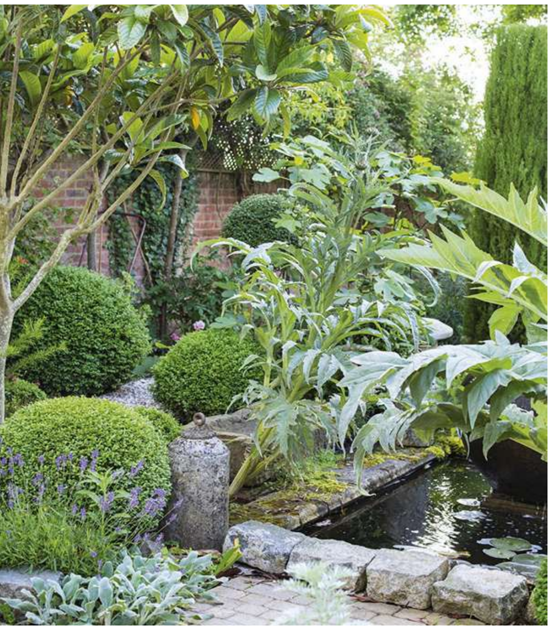
Sophie's shop Branching Out (branchingoutwingham.co.uk) is open by appointment.

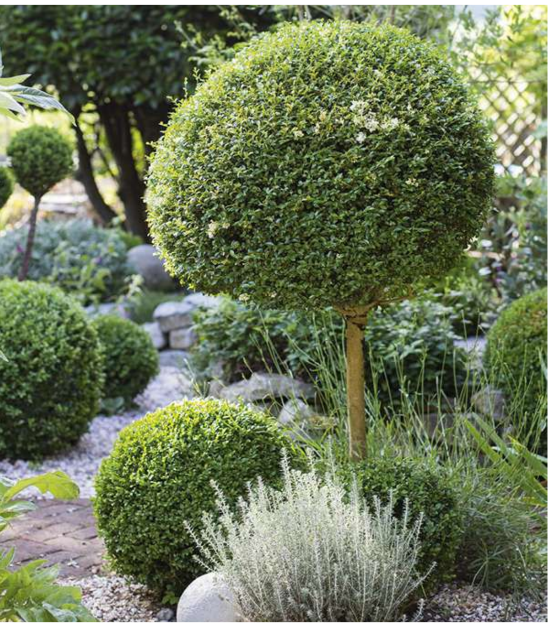


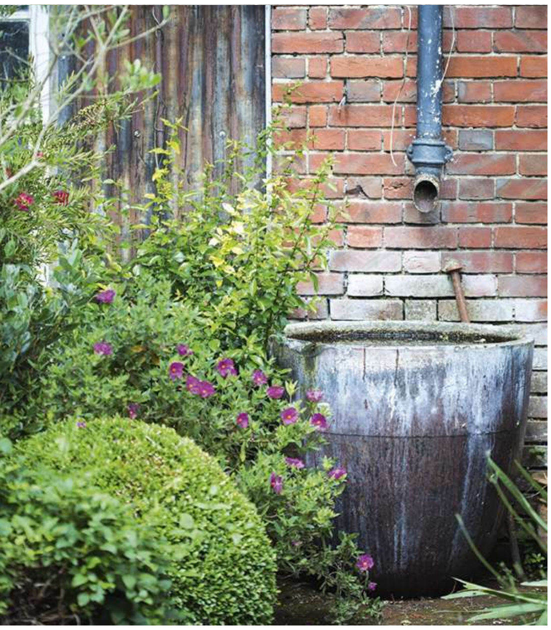
1 Granite block terrace
2 Pink granite rockery
3 Small dining terrace
4 Cardoon
5 Pond and fountain
6 *Cupressus sempervirens*
7 *Eriobotrya japonica*
8 *Fraxinus excelsior*

PLAN BY LIAM McAULEY

Two large olive trees, surrounded with prostrate rosemary and thyme in raised beds, contrast with the borrowed view glimpsed at the bottom of the garden, and remind us this garden is in Kent and not the Provençal maquis.







Designing a courtyard garden

Sophie de Bouvier de Cachard's five tips for a small garden with open aspect

1 Cram the garden with plants. It may seem counter-intuitive, but if you're mean, the space will look smaller. Use lots of large plants too and play with scale.

2 Install several paths that lead to hidden vistas, to statuary and surprises, so there's a sense of discovery and delight.

3 Simplify your colour palette, both in plants and garden accessories. Green is obviously the predominant colour here, with grey, white and stone.

4 Structure is important, but basic topiary shapes don't change throughout the year so always have something flowering to remind you of the season.

5 Avoid keeping too many plants in small pots. In some courtyards pots may be the only option, and they can add colour, focus and interest. But most plants prefer to be in the soil, and fewer pots cuts down on the need for endless watering.

▷ replaced with granite cobblestones on paths, low walls and in piles from restoration yards, locally and in France – an on-going search. The spaces between, important elements in a garden like this, are gravelled with Canterbury Spar multi-toned chippings. Plants are bought big because Sophie likes "to achieve my visions straight away, I have none of the gardener's famed patience. I'm always in a hurry to sit and enjoy my ideas".

Sophie and De Vésian are in accord: coloured flowers should be kept to a minimum, just white, purple and blue, with splashes of magenta. *Retama monosperma* spreads its white, bridal veil; lavender flowers in special beds where the rich soil has been lightened with grit; echiums for their magnificent showiness; artichokes, cardoons and echinops for their architectural elegance, and in pots so they can leave centre stage once their starring role is over; and agapanthus, tiny white daisies (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) and fennel that pop up in between the topiary.

Most plants are trimmed: hummocks of pittisporum, srosemary, small-leaved *Ligustrum delavayanum*, *Teucrium fruticans*, artemesia and clipped box everywhere. All kept in check by constant attention with shears. She plays with scale, cramming the garden with giants, such as *Eriobotrya japonica*, large fig trees and a *Pinus pinea* whose silhouette epitomises southern France.

As a dealer in eclectic decorative antiques and vintage industrial wares, Sophie regularly sets off back to France, bagging ecclesiastic and taxidermy pieces, and unique gardenalia: stone objets trouves, 19th-century wirework furniture, fountains and ever-changing delights that are just as likely to end up in her garden as in her shop or on her website. "I buy things that please me. Sometimes it breaks my heart to sell them but," she shrugs, "I have to remind myself it's a job as well as a passion." □

This page

Top A small rectangular pond reflects giant cardoon leaves and the silhouettes of box and *Cupressus sempervirens*. Antique tether stones form the cornerstones.

Middle Clipped box and ligustrum balls are echoed in granite spheres, dotted on the Spar chipped areas between the beds. *Ozothamnus rosmarinifolius* 'Silver Jubilee' adds a grey note.

Bottom Sophie's purchases for her shop often find their way temporarily into the garden, here a large, French pottery oil jar acts as a water butt, next to magenta *Cistus* x *pulverulentus*.

Facing page

Top A granite block path leads through a metalwork gate into the main garden. The old trestle table was found in an outhouse and dates from the property's days as a ropemaker's premises.

Below left A pair of *Cupressus* frame the view to the house past the pond. *Linaria purpurea* in the foreground is an uninvited guest that follows Sophie from garden to garden.

Below right A limestone ball takes centre stage, held on a plinth made up by Sophie from her collection of mismatched masonry, surrounded by shaped *Artemisia absinthium*.

Steps to success

Faced with a compact garden on different levels, landscape architect Floris Steyaert has created a unified whole using a limited palette of shade-loving plants

WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW** PHOTOGRAPHS **MAAYKE DE RIDDER**

What do you do when you want to make better use of a basement without losing too much of your garden? The common solution is to dig down, shifting the retaining wall of the garden backwards slightly to create a bigger light well. But when that retaining wall would be 2.5m high, and when the ground floor of your flat is another metre higher still, clearly, a more creative solution is called for.

This was the scenario facing architect-turned-leatherworker Michael Guérisse at his central Brussels apartment. "It's so rare to have a garden in this part of Brussels and we really wanted to make the most of it," he says. It's small, just 7.5m x 5.5m, and given the dramatic changes in level, Michael kept his expectations in check. "I simply wanted a low-maintenance, informal space," he says. "Somewhere I could forget I was in the city."

Thanks to garden designer Floris Steyaert, Michael now has what he dreamed of – and a whole lot more besides. Taking inspiration from the rough brick walls that surround the garden, Floris proposed a wild, informal 'jungle garden' planted with shade-tolerant plants that suit the northeasterly ▷

This page

Top Ceiling-height windows at the rear of Michael's apartment let in plenty of light but necessitated an innovative garden design that would both look great and maximise light and space.

Middle The limestone rocks for this water feature were rejects from a local quarry, which helped keep costs down.

Bottom Contrasting foliage is key to this garden, with the differing shapes and colours of the *Amelanchier lamarckii*, ferns, hostas and *Hydrangea quercifolia* combining to create green patchwork.

KEY ELEMENTS

What Small, walled, city garden.

Where Central Brussels.

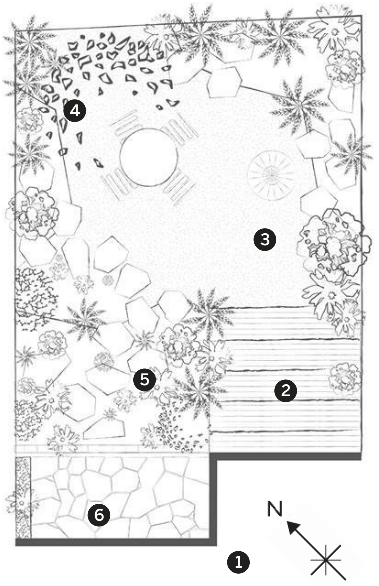
Soil Heavy clay.

Size 7.5 x 5.5m.

Aspect Northeast facing.

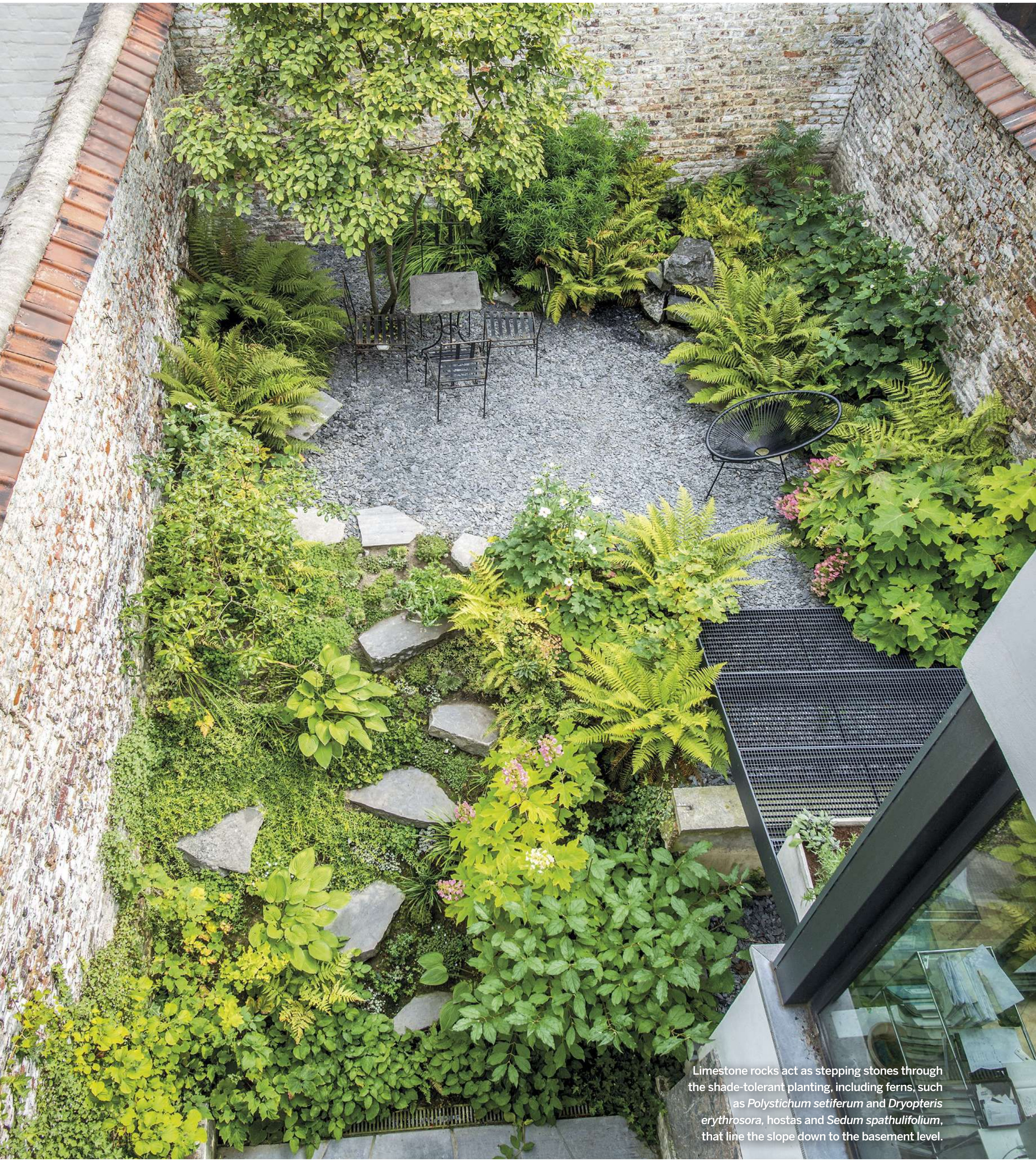
Special features Steep 2.5m slope, planted with woodland plants, plus flat, gravelled terrace.

Designed by Floris Steyaert (florissteyaert.be).

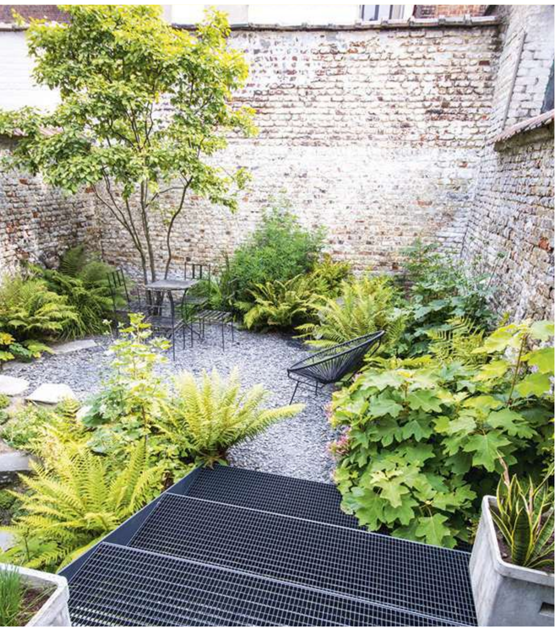


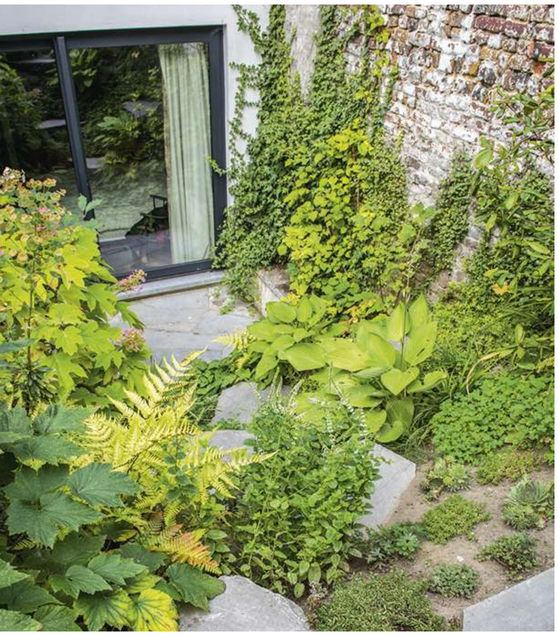
1 House
2 Metal grille steps
3 Gravelled terrace and seating area
4 Multi-stemmed *Amelanchier lamarckii*
5 Stepping stone steps
6 Lower ground terrace

PLAN BY LIAM McAULEY



Limestone rocks act as stepping stones through the shade-tolerant planting, including ferns, such as *Polystichum setiferum* and *Dryopteris erythrosora*, hostas and *Sedum spathulifolium*, that line the slope down to the basement level.





Taking advantage of tricky topography

Five design tips from Floris Steyaert for coping with a difficult site

1 Always get a survey. Even a garden that appeares to be flat, can have level changes of a metre or more.

2 Work with what's there. Sometimes clients want to change everything, but I recommend working with what you've got. It can help with creating the character and atmosphere of the garden.

3 Tricky sites often have tricky access, so be sure to consider this when planning the garden. Although we knew we would be able to bring the multi-stemmed amelanchier tree we were using in this garden through a window in the apartment, it was still quite a challenge and took three people to manoeuvre it into place.

4 Think carefully about your materials. In a small garden, I wouldn't advise using too many different materials. I like to stick to a limited palette, but to use things in different ways, such as using square stones for a terrace, and then cutting them in half to make a path.

5 Try to be clever. In a small space, every inch matters. We designed the metal steps to double up as seating, and the rock pathway outside Michael's bedroom to look like a natural feature.

▷ aspect and local conditions. Instead of a retaining wall, Floris suggested connecting the garden with the basement bedroom via a slope, densely planted with a patchwork of ivy, lilyturf, barrenwort, hostas and ferns to bind the soil. Limestone rocks (rejected by the local quarry, and carefully chosen by Floris and Michael for their shape and texture) have been placed randomly enough that they look natural, while also forming an apparently serendipitous pathway up to the garden. "Looking out from the bedroom, you see a wall of green dotted with rocks, not merely a route to somewhere else," says Floris.

On the level above, an elegant set of wide, steel grille steps neatly links the living area to the garden, while also doubling up as extra seating for parties or outdoor suppers. It is both functional and a part of the garden to enjoy in its own right – as are the dining area under the amelanchier tree, the limestone fountain and the small paved terrace outside the bedroom – a lovely spot for breakfast, particularly in late spring when the lilac is out.

To complement the contemporary architecture, a limited colour palette of white, black and green with accents of purple was chosen, although Floris admits that colour is intentionally fairly minimal. "The idea was to work more with textures and nuances of green," he says, pointing out the deeply lobed foliage of *Hydrangea quercifolia* contrasting with the glossy leaves of *Acanthus mollis*, feathery fern fronds and the divided evergreen leaves of *Choisya* x *dewitteana* 'Aztec Pearl', whose orange blossom scent hangs in the garden air on warm days during spring and autumn.

Despite the garden's small size, Floris's enthusiasm for this challenging project is tangible. "With larger projects, the garden is often the first thing you see, even before you enter the house," he says. "But with smaller city gardens, you never know what you will find. I love creating that sense of surprise." □

This page

Top At first Michael wanted to repaint the old walls, but Floris persuaded him to leave them as they are, so their roughness would complement the wild, 'jungle' feel of the garden. *Polystichum setiferum* and *Hydrangea quercifolia* soften the wide, metal steps that double as additional seating.

Middle *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert' adds a bright highlight to the predominately green planting. More splashes of white come from the flowers of *Choisya* x *dewitteana* 'Aztec Pearl', *Erodium* x *variabile* 'Album' and *Hydrangea quercifolia*, which gradually fade to pink.

Bottom From his basement window Michael can now look out on a lush wall of green that includes *Hosta* 'Devon Green', *Sedum spathulifolium* 'Cape Blanco' and *Erodium* x *variabile* 'Album', growing on the slope, and *Hedera helix* 'Star' and *Cymbalaria muralis* partly covering the wall.

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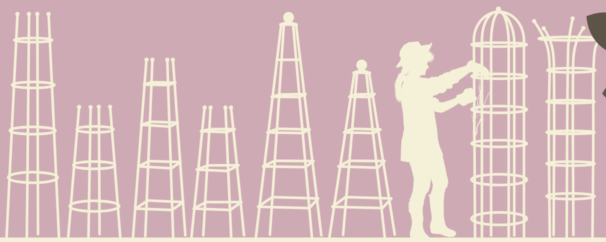

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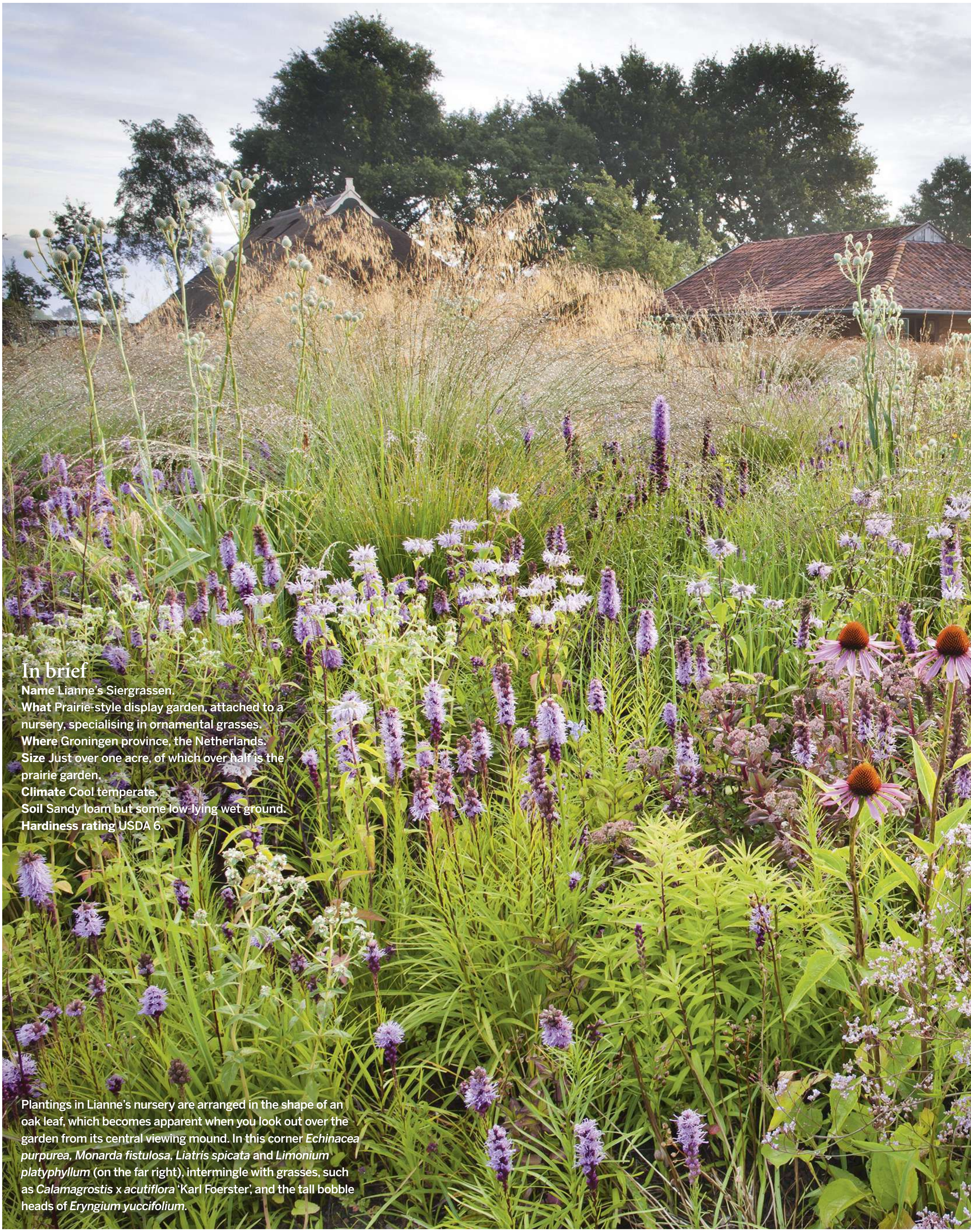


In brief

Name Lianne's Siergrassen.
What Prairie-style display garden, attached to a nursery, specialising in ornamental grasses.
Where Groningen province, the Netherlands.
Size Just over one acre, of which over half is the prairie garden.
Climate Cool temperate.
Soil Sandy loam but some low-lying wet ground.
Hardiness rating USDA 6.

Plantings in Lianne's nursery are arranged in the shape of an oak leaf, which becomes apparent when you look out over the garden from its central viewing mound. In this corner *Echinacea purpurea*, *Monarda fistulosa*, *Liatris spicata* and *Limonium platyphyllum* (on the far right), intermingle with grasses, such as *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', and the tall bobble heads of *Eryngium yuccifolium*.

On the wild side

In the prairie-style gardens around her nursery in the Netherlands, Lianne Pot has created a vibrant and richly coloured ecosystem that buzzes with life

WORDS **NOEL KINGSBURY** PHOTOGRAPHS **ROBERT MABIC**

There are no prizes for guessing the speciality of Lianne Pot's nursery, Lianne's Siergrassen. But the prairie garden she has created to showcase her nursery offers far more than a selection of ornamental grasses. Like a real prairie it is an immersive experience, allowing you to plunge down paths between massed perennials. So many striking combinations and so many plant species, some clearly happy enough to spread and self-sow. It is not nature, but neither is it a conventional garden. It is something new: an ambitious artificial ecosystem, colourful, vibrant and very happy – and after eight years it is maturing beautifully.

What made you decide to set up the nursery?
I started gardening after we moved to the country and found I loved it – I didn't know I was creative – so, having worked as a social worker for 15 years, I decided to go back to school to study garden design and construction. Working as a garden designer I came to love grasses, the way they change through the seasons, and started collecting them. Then someone said why not sell them, so in 2000 I started the nursery.

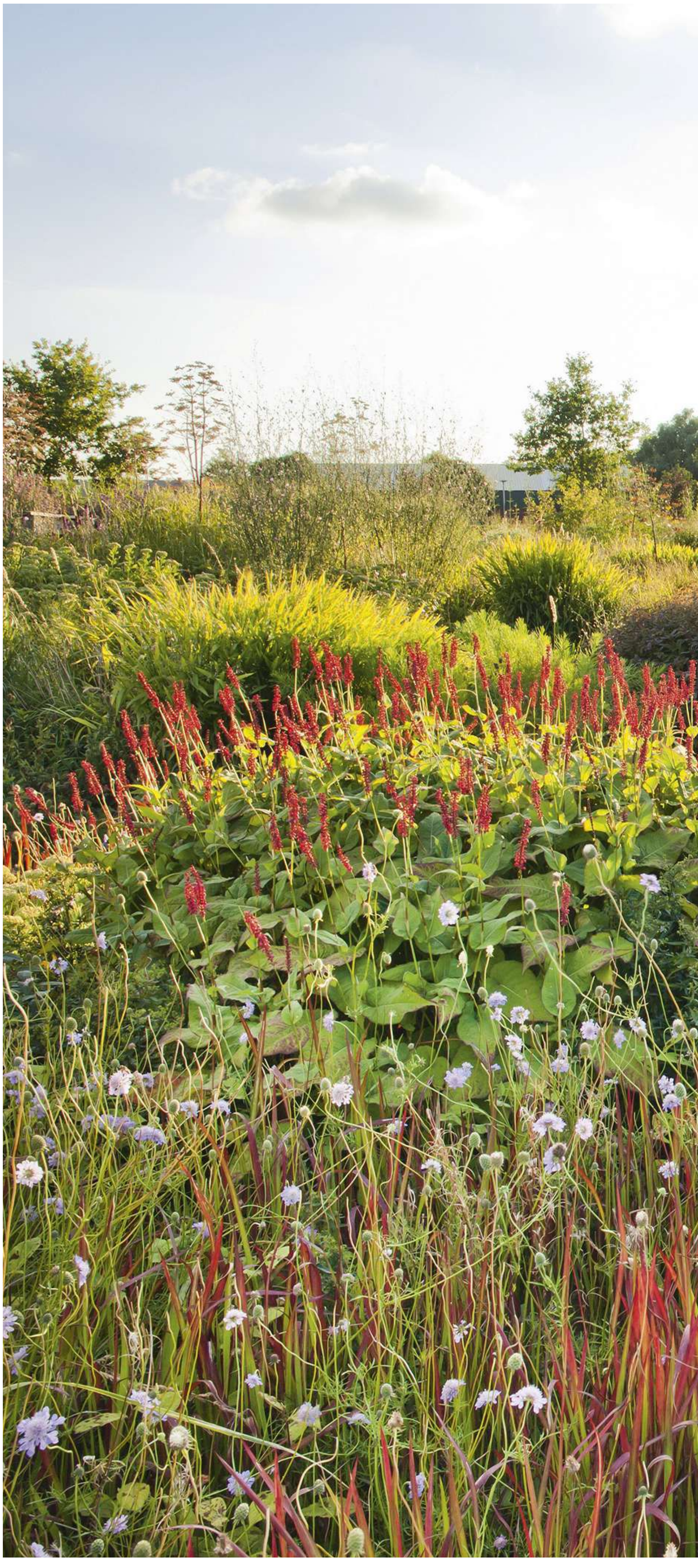
Who or what inspired you to garden?
The first garden that really inspired me was that of the Dutch artist Ton ter Linden [issue 224, page 54] with its naturalistic style. That was where I fell in love with *Stipa gigantea*. I grew up in the countryside, which is why I think I love this style, it reminds me of my childhood. Some time ago I found a collection of dried flowers and grasses I'd pressed when I was around ten or 11 and had completely forgotten about.

How did your passion for prairie plants arise?
I visited Hermannshof in Germany [issue 225, page 72] in 2007, which was an amazing inspiration, with all the different biotopes. The prairie garden there made me want to visit the USA, so the following summer I spent six weeks travelling with my family across the prairie states. Back home I decided to try to translate the prairie concept to the garden, and show people what is possible. I was struck by the idea of the prairie as a community of plants. I wanted to combine grasses and perennials, and not do any watering or feeding. And not just prairie perennials, I wanted as wide a range of plants as possible.

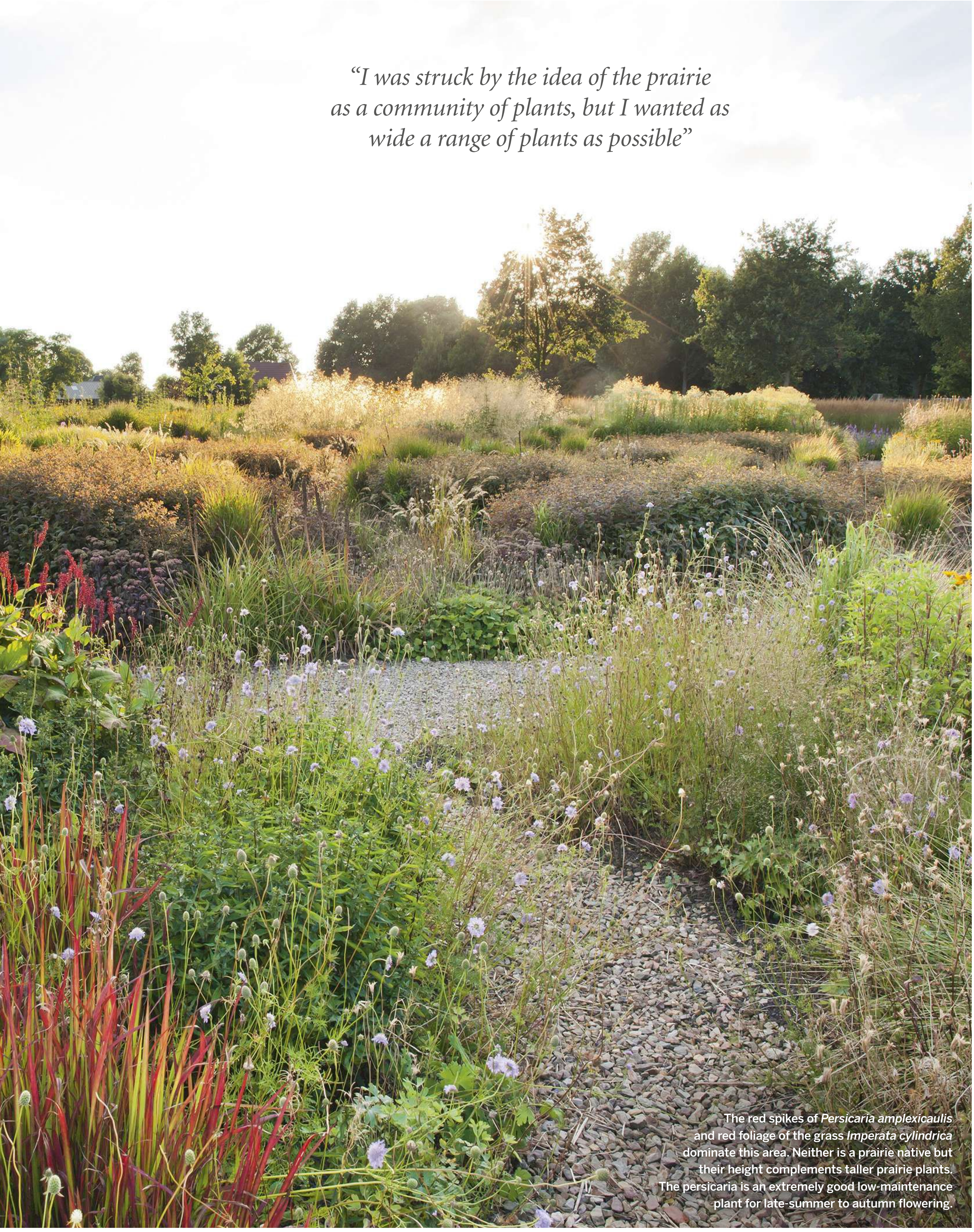
How does the garden progress through the year?
We have some spring and early summer prairie perennials, such as *Geum triflorum*, and some *Pulsatilla* and *Camassia* species. But any small botanical bulbs are good, as well as the more conventional garden bulbs, such as *Narcissus* and *Allium*. *Achillea* sp. combine well, for early to midsummer. Distinct foliage colour, such as the red of *Penstemon digitalis* 'Husker Red', is good early in the year. Most of the prairie plants flower in late summer and autumn, but in winter there is the combination of the seedheads. My favourite is *Panicum virgatum* with *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Lavendelturm'.

How much work is involved in maintaining the garden?
We cut everything down in February or March and remove all the cut material. There is some weeding, but not much as the

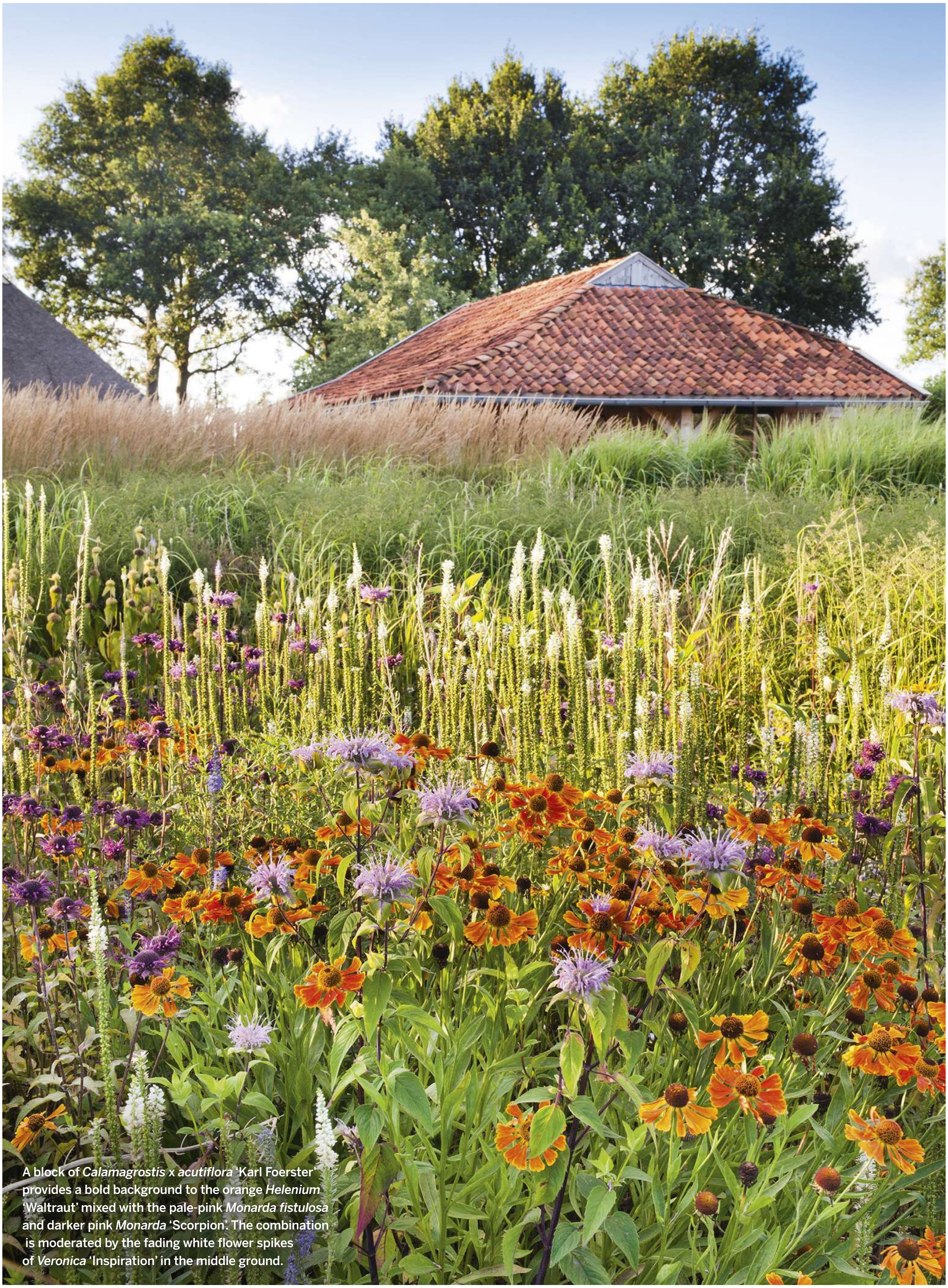
To continue turn to page 60



"I was struck by the idea of the prairie as a community of plants, but I wanted as wide a range of plants as possible"

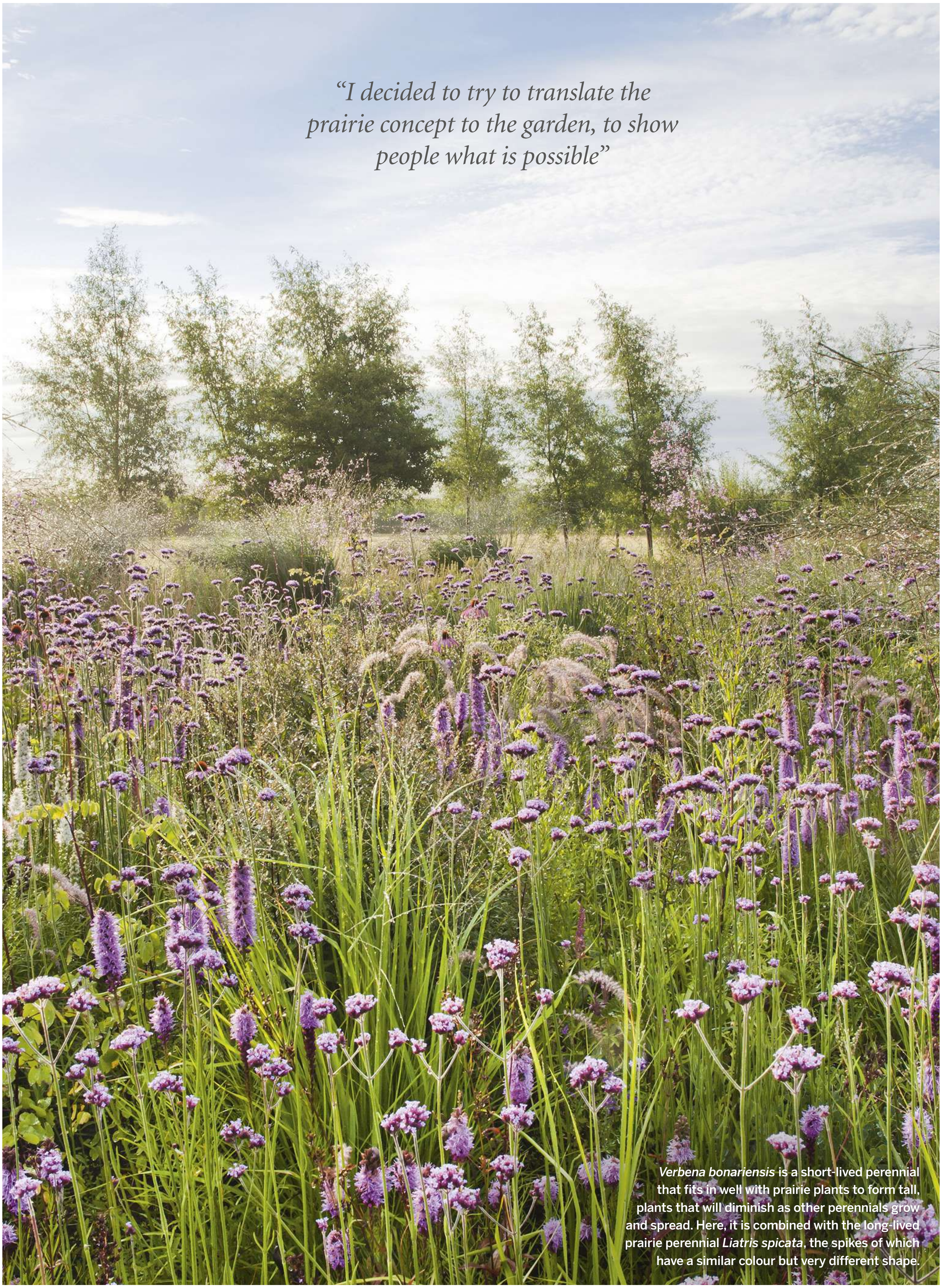


The red spikes of *Persicaria amplexicaulis* and red foliage of the grass *Imperata cylindrica* dominate this area. Neither is a prairie native but their height complements taller prairie plants. The persicaria is an extremely good low-maintenance plant for late-summer to autumn flowering.



A block of *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' provides a bold background to the orange *Helenium* 'Waltraut' mixed with the pale-pink *Monarda fistulosa* and darker pink *Monarda* 'Scorpion'. The combination is moderated by the fading white flower spikes of *Veronica* 'Inspiration' in the middle ground.

> *"I decided to try to translate the prairie concept to the garden, to show people what is possible"*



Verbena bonariensis is a short-lived perennial that fits in well with prairie plants to form tall plants that will diminish as other perennials grow and spread. Here, it is combined with the long-lived prairie perennial *Liatris spicata*, the spikes of which have a similar colour but very different shape.

▷ perennials are densely planted, seven to nine plants per square metre, so there is minimal room for weeds. Some of the perennials self-seed; *Monarda fistulosa* does this but not aggressively. One aster seeded too much, so we removed it. We have an 8cm lava mulch, which reduces perennial seeding. It is important that this stays clean, so we take away dead material in winter. It is the choice of plants and the way they're combined that is most important when it comes to creating a dynamic system of plants that doesn't need too much maintenance

The American Midwest has a very different climate to northern Europe, how does this affect plant growth?

Everything grows well. I have had few problems, but the American grasses do grow slowly, sometimes very slowly, we have to be patient. Unlike many grasses, prairie grasses keep to a nice size, so they don't need dividing after a few years. *Andropogon gerardii*, the classic prairie species, for example, is very satisfactory.

Have you any plans for the future?

I'm planning to make another area, with a different character, inspired by steppe flora, that will have a grey-green feel and will use shorter grasses, such as *Poa* and *Eragrostis*. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Lianne's Siergrassen, Jan Gosseswijk 31, 9367 TE De Wilp, Groningen, the Netherlands.
Tel +31 (0)594 644263.
Web siergras.nl
Open Thursday to Saturday, April to October.

Find out more about how to grow prairie plants and make prairie combinations work in European conditions in Noel's online feature at **gardensillustrated.com**

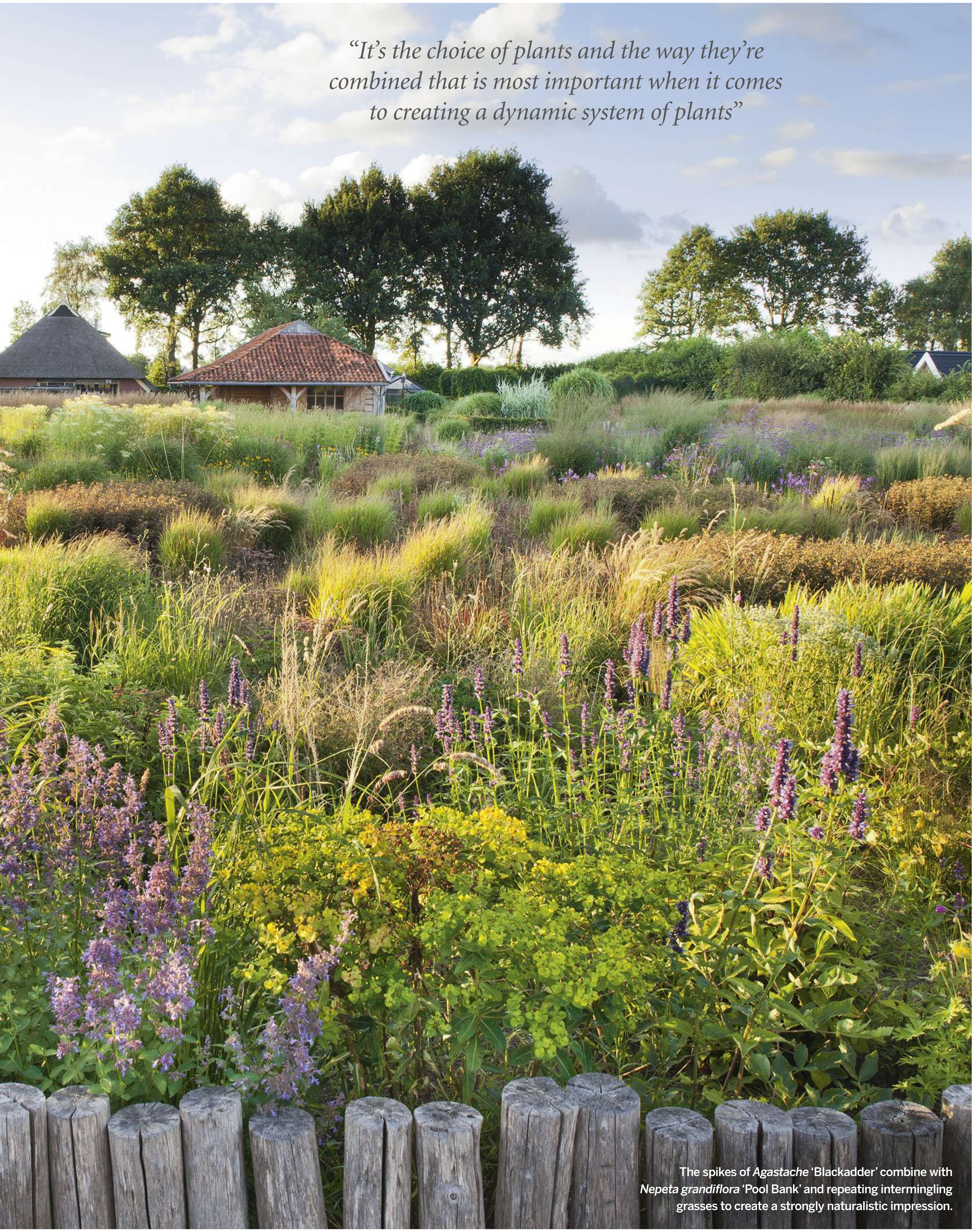
Prairie gardens to visit

Cambo Walled Garden
Cambo House & Estate, Kingsbarns, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8QD.
Tel 01333 450054, camboestate.com
UK's largest and most authentic prairie planting.

Schau- und Sichtungsgarten Hermannshof
Babostrasse 5, 69469, Weinheim, Germany.
Tel +49 6201 13652, sichtungsgarten-hermannshof.de
This public park is home to colourful and varied prairie planting, based on a variety of natural plant communities.

Schulenberg Prairie
The Morton Arboretum, 4100 Illinois Route 53, Lisle, Il 60532, USA. Tel +1 630 968 0074, mortonarb.org
One of the oldest prairie restorations, dating back to the 1960s.

Sheffield Botanical Gardens
Clarkehouse Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S10 2LN.
Tel 0114 250 0500, sbg.org.uk
A small but exuberant early trial by the University of Sheffield's Professor of Horticultural Ecology, James Hitchmough.



> *"It's the choice of plants and the way they're combined that is most important when it comes to creating a dynamic system of plants"*

The spikes of *Agastache* 'Blackadder' combine with *Nepeta grandiflora* 'Pool Bank' and repeating intermingling grasses to create a strongly naturalistic impression.

Agapanthus

Known as African lily or lily of the Nile, architectural agapanthus work in schemes large and small. But which ones should you choose?

WORDS **ANDY McINDOE** PHOTOGRAPHS **DIANNA JAZWINSKI**

In brief

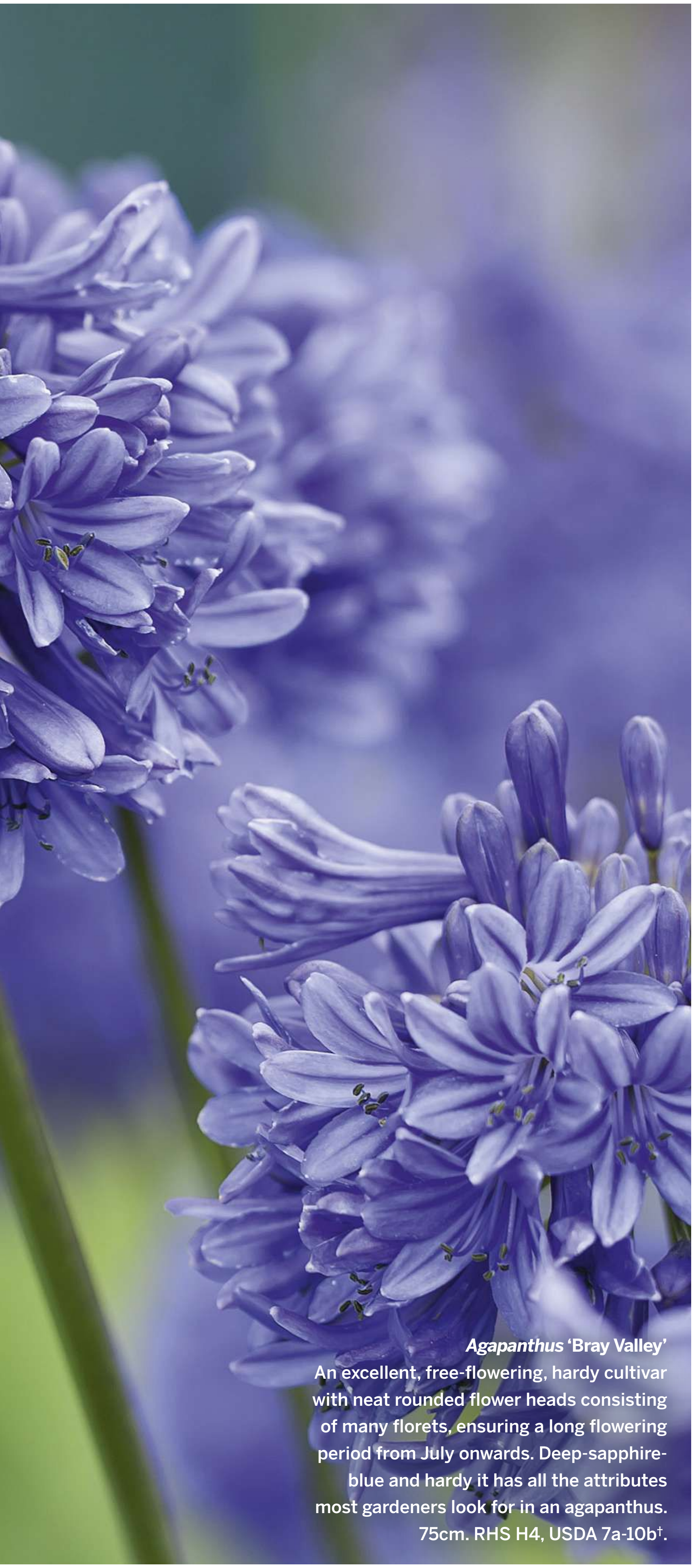
What Evergreen or deciduous perennials with strap-like leaves and umbels of trumpet-shaped flowers in shades of blue or white carried above the leaves on smooth stems.

Origins Southern Africa, although some have become naturalised in countries as varied as Australia, UK, Mexico and Ethiopia.

Season All bloom from mid to late summer, most producing attractive seedheads.

Size Height can vary from around 30cm to more than a metre. Clump-forming to a maximum of 30cm.

Conditions Moist, well-drained soil in a site that gets sun for most of the day.



Agapanthus **'Bray Valley'**
An excellent, free-flowering, hardy cultivar with neat rounded flower heads consisting of many florets, ensuring a long flowering period from July onwards. Deep-sapphire-blue and hardy it has all the attributes most gardeners look for in an agapanthus. 75cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b†.

JULIAN WINSLOW

Andy McIndoe is a horticulturist and author with a special interest in trees and shrubs. He has been responsible for 25 gold-medal winning exhibits at RHS Chelsea Flower Shows.

I rarely encountered agapanthus in my early gardening life. I remember one magnificent plant in a cottage garden in Cornwall. It was drenched in sunlight behind a blue palisade gate and against a white cottage wall. Deep-blue spherical flower heads exploded above lush, slender, emerald leaves; sparkling and tropical. Clearly, a plant for a location with a favoured climate.

During my early days in Hampshire, *Agapanthus* Headbourne hybrids, bred and grown locally, appealed to summer garden centre shoppers because they reliably produced flowers in pots. Their rich-blue flowers were a delight, but they were smaller, and never as impressive as those I knew from the South West. Nonetheless the colour and flower form was unique as a border plant and a cut flower, what is more they were reliable, survived the winter and flowered well in most gardens.

This was not the case with the plants brought back in suitcases from the market in Madeira, or bought as dormant roots in packets with brightly coloured pictures. 'Why doesn't my agapanthus flower?' is still one of the top ten most frequently asked gardening questions. Gardening experts offer a selection of solutions from baking in the sun to keeping plants pot bound. In all cases there is an element of truth, but more than anything it comes down to the species or cultivar.

Agapanthus hail from southern Africa, but, like their fellow countrymen crocosmias, they have spread around the world and naturalised where the climate is favourable for them. Their distribution often followed sea routes, originally carried by cargo ships and planted in the gardens of merchants and traders.

In their native environment they enjoy sunshine, fertile soil and adequate rainfall. Those from cooler parts and higher altitudes are deciduous and need a dormant period, those growing in warmer regions are evergreen and often larger in stature. ▷

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†Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ The opinions of botanists on the number of species varies from six to ten and the genus has been subject to much reclassification. It is sufficient to say that there are innumerable hybrids of mixed parentage cultivated throughout the world.

Agapanthus are plants of passion. The colour, exotic character and demands of cultivation stir that spirit of endeavour in those who fall in love with them and devote their lives to selecting and breeding the best. I must admit I have wondered what all the fuss is about, surely they are just blue or white, big or a littler smaller?

When I visit Fairweather's Garden Centre in Hampshire, National Collection holder Patrick Fairweather extols the virtues of individual cultivars and points out details I have missed: the colour of individual flower stalks (pedicels), whether the anthers are blonde or dark, whether the sheath around the flower head drops off or hangs on to the faded blooms. He emphasises that those with more florets have a longer flowering period, and those with stronger flower stems are more likely to display their seedheads attractively into autumn.

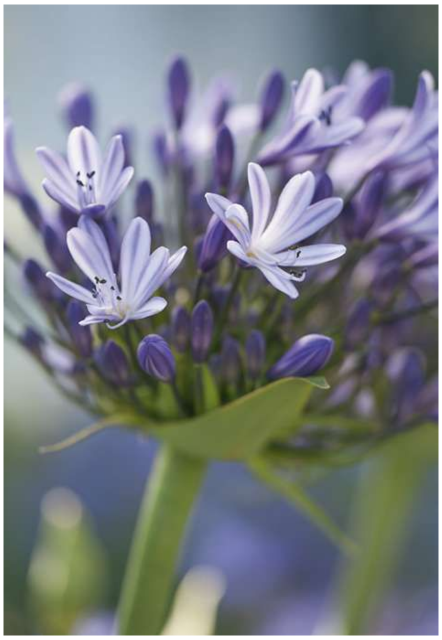
Agapanthus bloom over a long period, from early to late summer. Flowering times vary by region and the season but they can roughly be divided into three groups. Early flowering cultivars bloom as early as June into July. Mid season from July to mid August and late flowering cultivars from mid August onwards.

If I were to plant just one agapanthus it would have to be a rich-blue one. However, the pure-white flowering cultivars, such as *A.* 'White Heaven', have a sophisticated charm and are perfect for a cool green-and-white planting scheme. They have a contemporary elegance and somehow those sleek, white blooms make the slender green leaves all the more elegant.

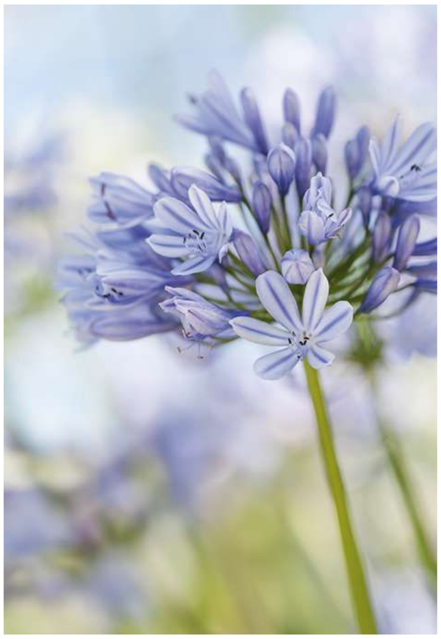
Clearly agapanthus are not just blue or white, large or small. The variety is amazing and all have their special qualities. These are versatile perennials for gardens of all sizes and situations whether you grow them in pots, in the border or cut them for the house. One thing is certain: plant just one and you will desire more. □

• Andy's recommendations for agapanthus continue over the next six pages.

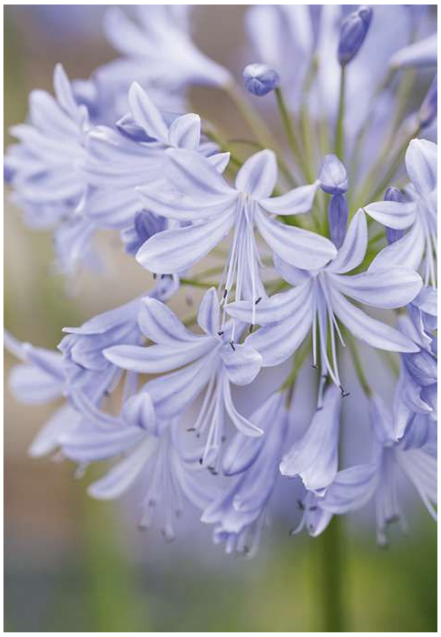
Agapanthus for pots



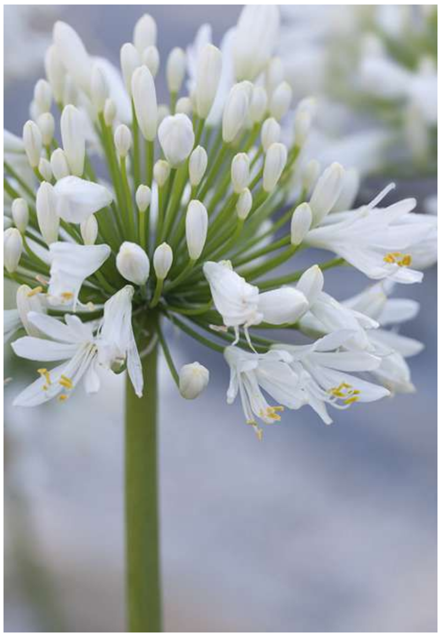
***Agapanthus* 'Megan's Mauve'**
An evergreen cultivar with luxuriant strappy leaves and tall, strong stems carrying a spectacular flower head. Purple buds open to mauve blooms with darker stripes. Needs winter protection. 1.2m. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.



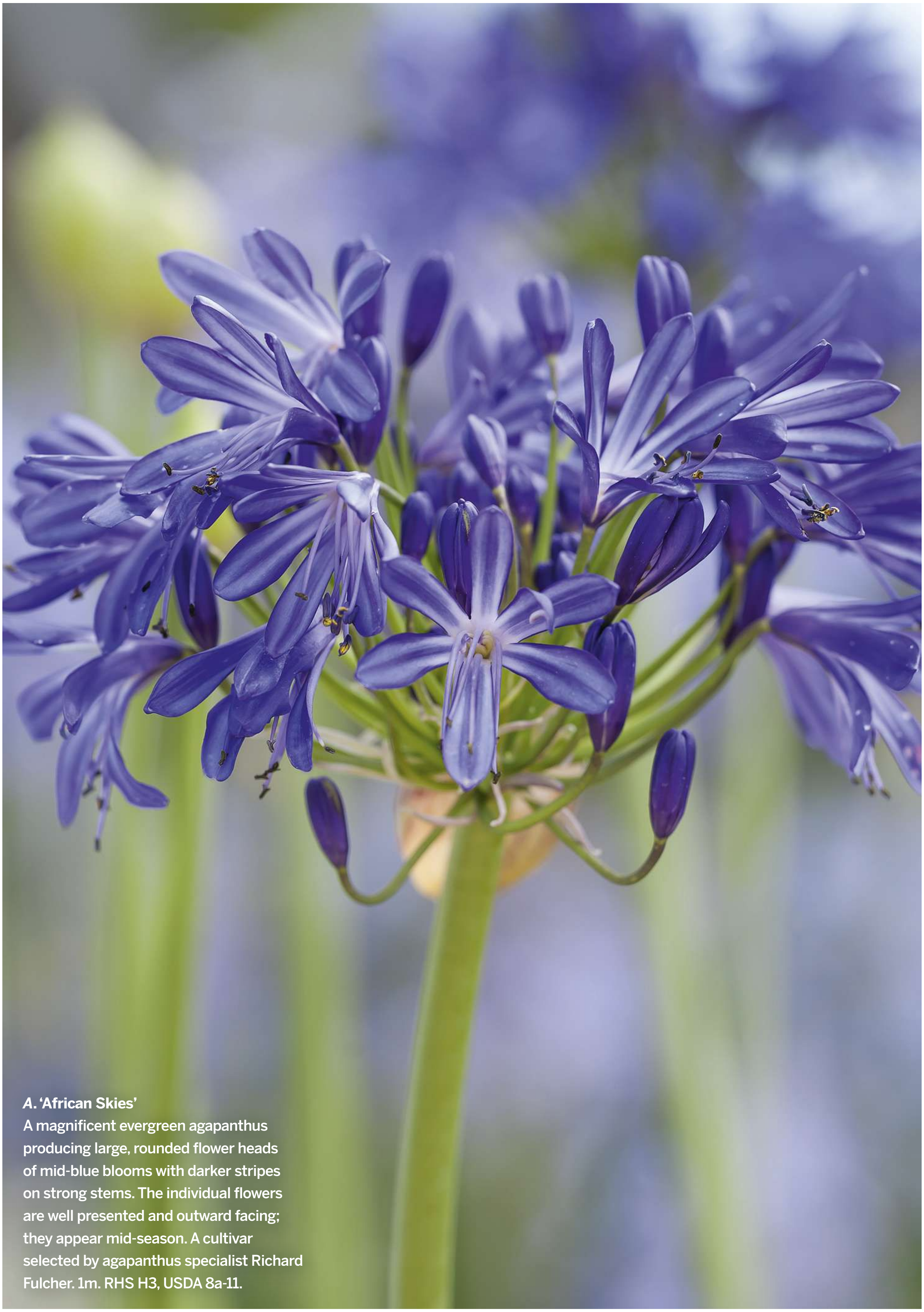
***A.* 'Moonlight Star'**
A lovely agapanthus with open, starry florets of pale-blue, distinctly striped with a deep-violet blue, giving the umbels a sparkling appearance. Blooming mid season the flowers are carried on strong, upright stems. 60cm.



***A.* 'Lavender Haze'**
Massive heads of many florets, elegantly poised on fine stalks. Flowers over a long period in mid season. In most areas it will need some winter protection. 90cm. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.

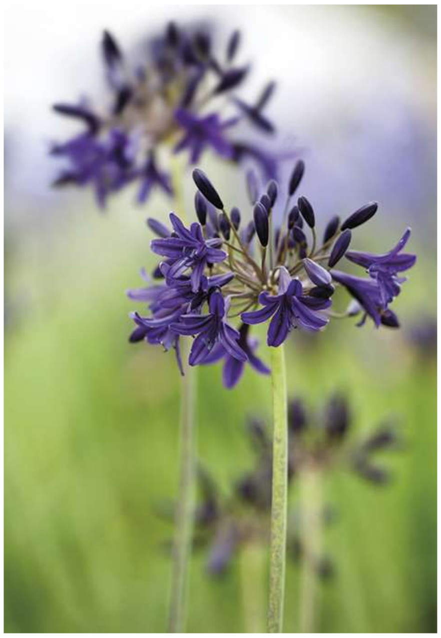


***A.* 'Snow Cloud'**
Huge, spherical heads of hundreds of pure-white flowers with yellow anthers on strong stems ensure a long blooming period in mid season. Perfect for a pot or a mixed border. 90cm. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.

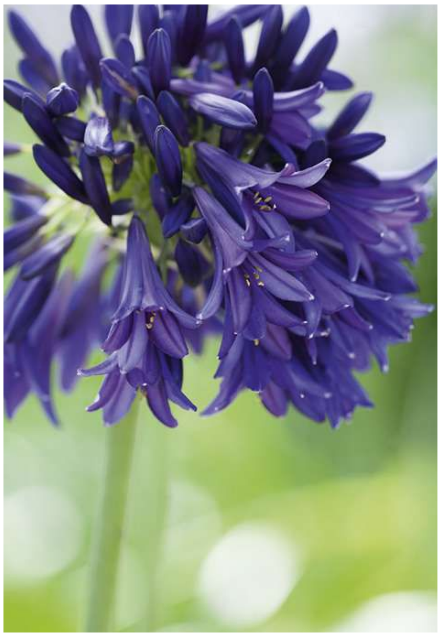


***A.* 'African Skies'**
A magnificent evergreen agapanthus producing large, rounded flower heads of mid-blue blooms with darker stripes on strong stems. The individual flowers are well presented and outward facing; they appear mid-season. A cultivar selected by agapanthus specialist Richard Fulcher. 1m. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.

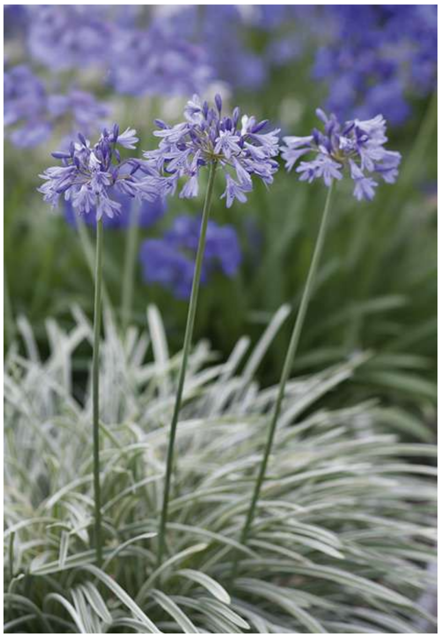
Agapanthus for beds and borders



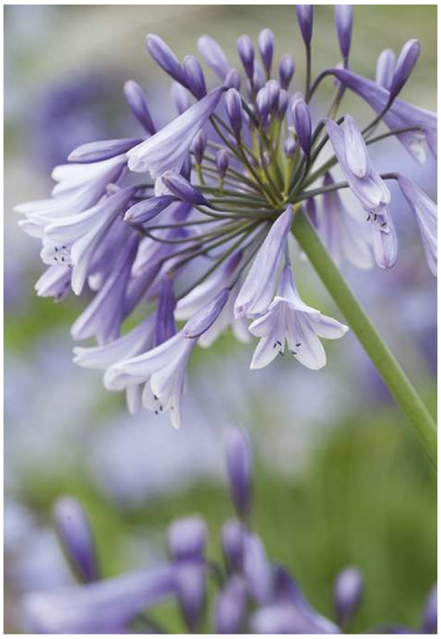
A. 'Indigo Dreams'
A deciduous cultivar with loose flower heads carried on rather lax stems. Its purple-blue flowers can appear almost black against paler cultivars, but is surprisingly hardy for such an exotic colour. 75cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



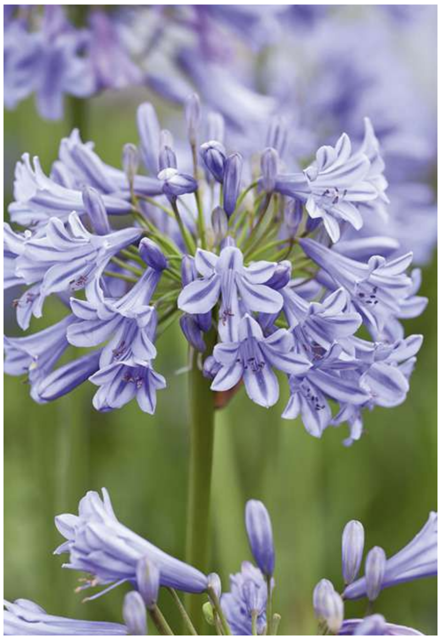
A. 'Purple Emperor'
An *Agapanthus inapertus* hybrid with large flower heads consisting of pendulous purple-blue flowers. The mid-to-late-season flowers are not prolific, but it is a hardy plant and a wonderful colour. 1m. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



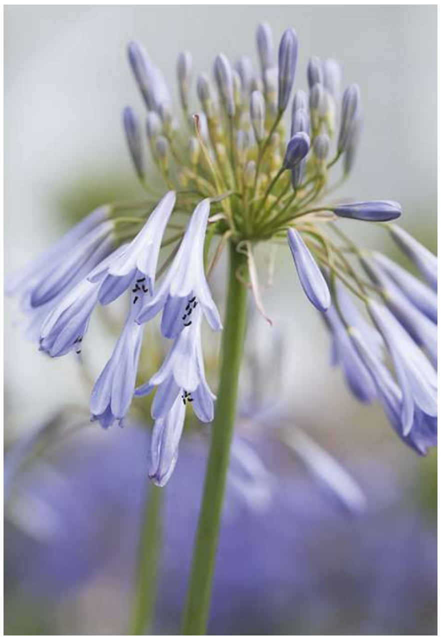
A. Silver Moon (= 'Notfred')
Its silver-edged, slender leaves make a splash in the border throughout the season. A hardy, deciduous cultivar with pale-blue flowers produced freely in mid season. 45cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



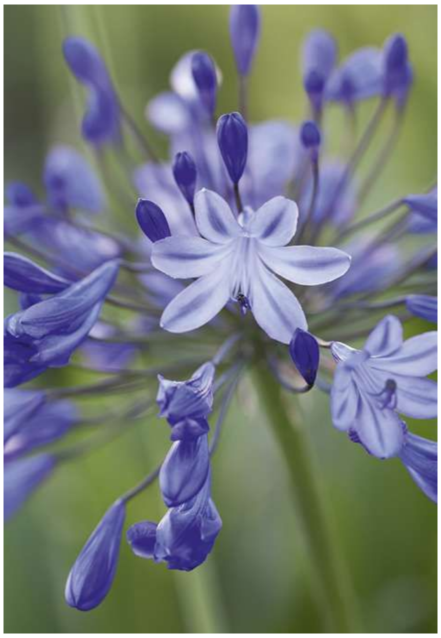
A. 'Liam's Lilac'
A late-flowering cultivar with loose heads of slender, trumpet-shaped flowers. Individual blooms are carried on dark stalks, deep lilac at the base, becoming paler at the mouth of each floret. 90cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



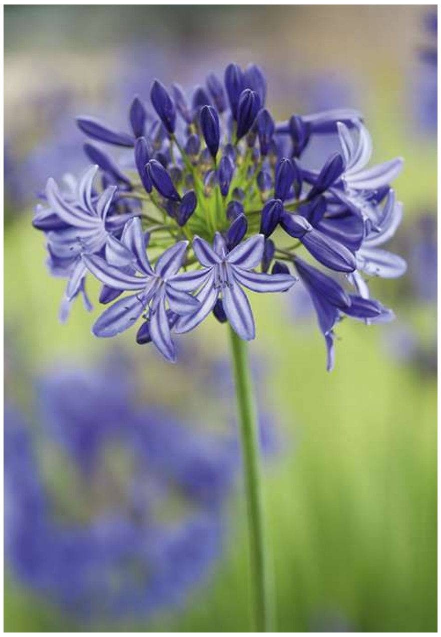
A. 'Glen Avon'
A hardy evergreen cultivar bred in New Zealand with large flower heads consisting of hundreds of pale-blue flowers with darker stripes through the centres of the petals. 1m. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.



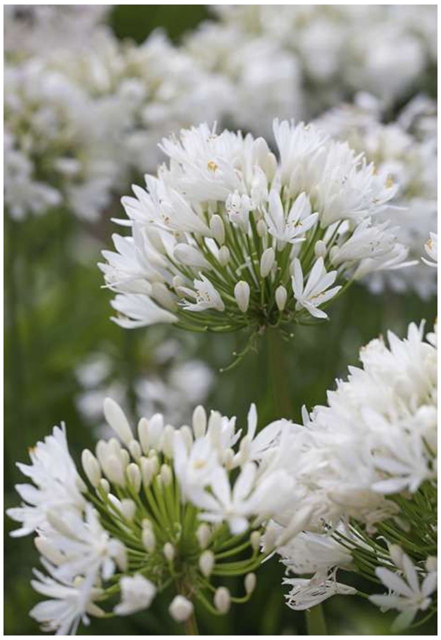
A. 'Ballerina'
An elegant, deciduous agapanthus with pale-blue florets, characteristic of its parent species *Agapanthus inapertus*. In well-drained soil and full sun it is free flowering in mid to late season. 1.2m. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



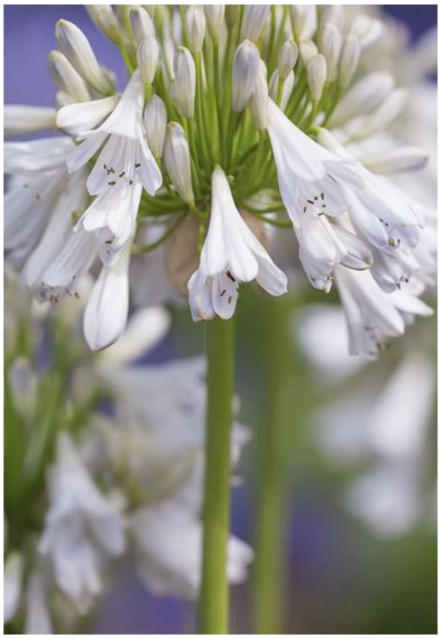
A. 'Jacaranda'
A particularly early flowering cultivar selected by plant breeder Ken Rigney of Southampton. Showy heads of mid-blue flowers, striped with a deeper blue, are held above evergreen foliage. 75cm. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.



A. 'Northern Star'
Free-flowering, hardy cultivar. Dark-purple buds, open to outward-facing, star-shaped blooms. Flowers are deep blue, with darker purple streaks down the centres of the petals. 75cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



A. 'White Heaven'
A hardy, cultivar with sparkling pure-white flower heads of starry, upturned florets with yellow stamens that are freely produced on compact plants in mid season.
75cm. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.



A. 'Silver Lining'
This hardy *Agapanthus praecox* x *Agapanthus inapertus* hybrid has strong flower stems carrying abundant showers of white blooms, flushed with pale blue-grey. Elegant and hardy. 60cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.

Cultivation

- Agapanthus are easy to grow in the open ground and in pots. However, they require certain growing conditions to flower well. Flower buds are formed in late autumn in the year before flowering, so how they're treated in the previous season is important; by spring it is too late.
- Some evergreen cultivars need winter protection in all but the mildest areas. If flower buds are frosted they do not develop. The hardy evergreen cultivars may suffer moderate foliage damage to the tips of the leaves in frosts but this should leave the flower buds unharmed as they are safely below ground. Deciduous cultivars may keep their foliage in mild winters, but they benefit from a dormant period and old foliage is best removed to allow new leaves to emerge.
- Agapanthus need plenty of water, particularly if grown in pots. Dry conditions, especially later in the year, can result in poor flowering the following season.
- Contrary to popular belief agapanthus are heavy feeders. Feeding twice a year, in spring and midsummer with rose fertiliser, or regular feeding with liquid tomato feed, provides plenty of nitrogen and potash for strong growth and abundant flowers.
- In the open ground moist, well-drained soil is ideal. Poor dry soil needs the addition of plenty of organic matter and slow-release fertiliser. In pots a mix of loam-based growing medium with a little horticultural grit is ideal. Agapanthus do not like to be overpotted, but contrary to popular belief they do not need to be pot-bound to flower.
- Most importantly agapanthus need sun for at least two thirds of the day. Inadequate sunlight results in thin stems poor growth and no flowers.

Planting partners

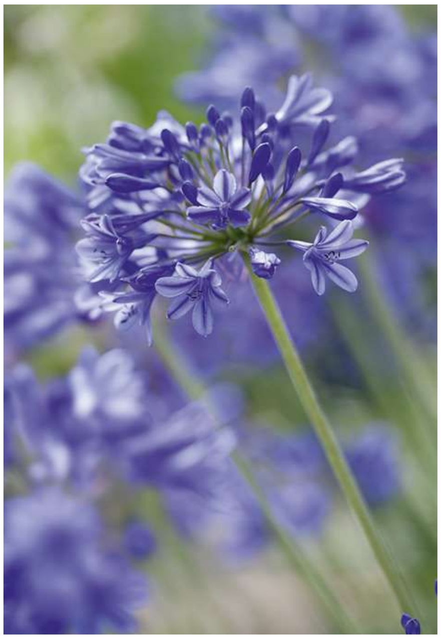
- Agapanthus are wonderful performers with the ability to adopt very different personalities according to different planting schemes. Combine them with herbaceous geraniums, roses and penstemons and the smaller, narrow-leaved cultivars embrace the role of summer stars. With the fiery hues of crocosmias, dahlias and heleniums the sapphire blooms of agapanthus take on a jewel-like quality. Plant them with cannas and big, glossy leaves and they become positively tropical.

- Blue agapanthus make a striking combination with hemerocallis. The foliage has a similar character, but the flower form and colouring are a marvellous contrast. Try planting hot orange or pale-yellow daylilies with the inky blooms of *A*. 'Northern Star'.
- Both blue and white agapanthus are a delight against soft, white, variegated foliage and the frothy flowers of early *Hydrangea paniculata*. *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Praecox' planted with *A*. 'Ballerina' has the refinement of Delftware porcelain.
- Extend the flowering season with the white-flowered *Allium* 'Mount Everest' and lilac-purple *Allium* 'Gladiator'; both bloom before the agapanthus.
- Agapanthus also look great in large terracotta pots, which in colder areas can be moved into a greenhouse or conservatory over winter.

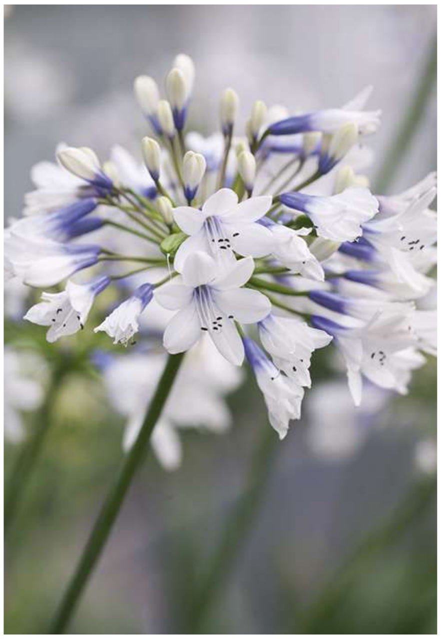
Where to see and buy

- **Bowdens**
  Sticklepath, Okehampton,
  Devon EX20 2NL.
  Tel 01837 840989,
  bowdenhostas.com
- **Fairweather's Garden Centre**
  Beaulieu, Hampshire SO42 7YB.
  Tel 01590 612113, fairweathers.co.uk
  National Collection holder with
  Agapanthus open days 29-30 July.
- **Hoyland Plant Centre**
  54 Greenside Lane, Hoyland,
  South Yorkshire S74 9PZ.
  Tel 01226 744466,
  somethingforthegarden.co.uk
  National Collection holder.
- **RJ Fulcher**
  Pine Cottage, Fourways, Eggesford,
  Chulmleigh, Devon EX18 7QZ.
  Tel 07718 505053.
  Plant breeder and National
  Collection holder. Opens by
  appointment in late summer.

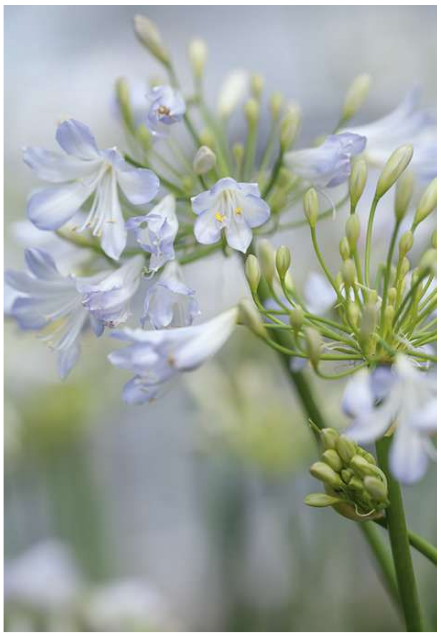
Agapanthus for small gardens



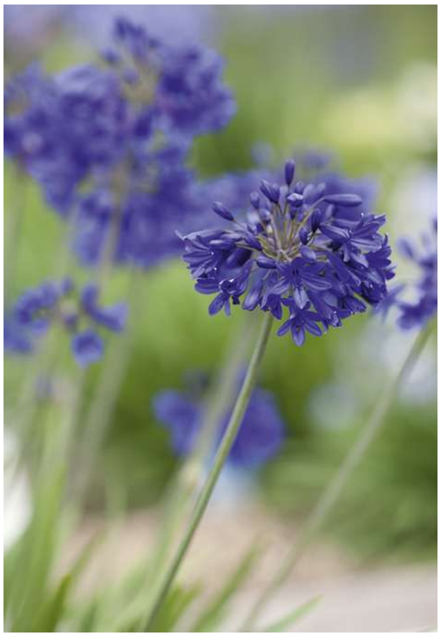
***A*. Brilliant Blue (= 'Aga0451')**
This early flowering cultivar from New Zealand is one of the best with brilliant, rich-blue flowers, striped with darker blue, in rounded umbels carried about narrow emerald-green leaves. 45cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



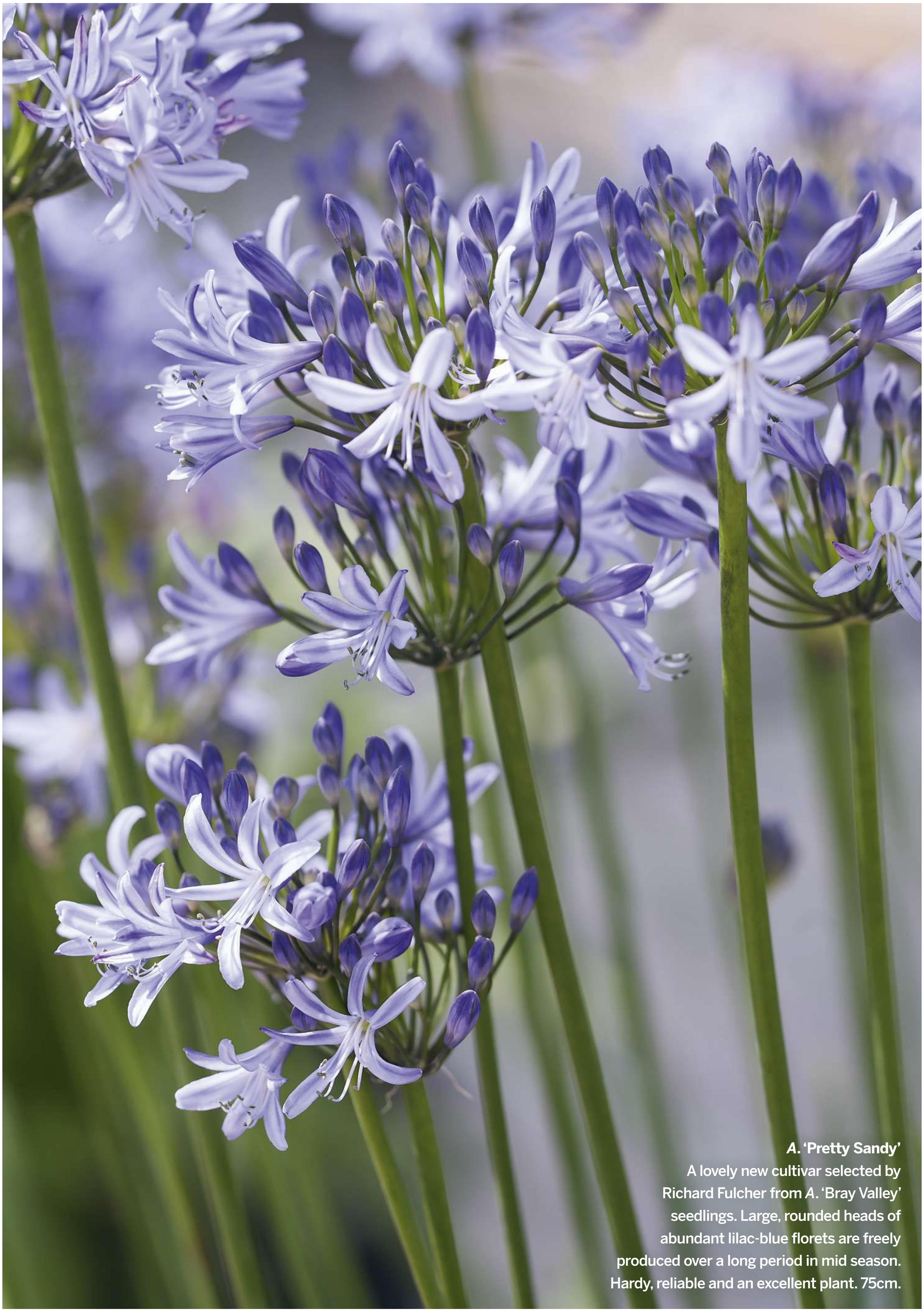
***A*. Twister**
A popular agapanthus with pretty sapphire-blue trumpets, opening to pure-white petals. It is the first hardy, bicoloured agapanthus. Has semi-evergreen foliage and a compact habit. 45cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



***A*. 'Silver Baby'**
Free-flowering from early in the season, this dwarf cultivar forms a clump of grass-like evergreen foliage and has generous umbels of starry, white blooms flushed with pale blue. 45cm. RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.



***A*. 'Flower of Love'**
An extremely free-flowering agapanthus introduced by plant breeder Richard Fulcher. Its dark-blue flowers are carried in full, rounded umbels above abundant, rich green leaves. 60cm.



***A.* 'Pretty Sandy'**
A lovely new cultivar selected by Richard Fulcher from *A.* 'Bray Valley' seedlings. Large, rounded heads of abundant lilac-blue florets are freely produced over a long period in mid season. Hardy, reliable and an excellent plant. 75cm.

MANY THANKS TO PATRICK FAIRWEATHER AND FAIRWEATHER'S GARDEN CENTRE WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.

Ursula Buchan

The award-winning writer and journalist on finding her voice, having fun and why writing about her grandfather may be her hardest challenge yet

WORDS CLAIRE MASSET PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Ursula Buchan is a writer in the mould of Vita Sackville-West and Christopher Lloyd. Like her predecessors, she is known for her personal and witty gardening columns. Like them she blends horticultural know-how and fluency with the pen. And like them too, she has created a wonderful garden. "Profusion within structure," she says, apologising for its unruliness – the expression, coincidentally, recalling the gardening styles of both Christo and Vita.

Vita wrote for the *Observer* for 15 years. Christo shared his wit with *Guardian* readers for 17 years. Ursula has outdone them both: her prize-winning monthly column for *The Spectator* lasted a staggering 26 years. With well over 300 articles and 17 books under her belt, she has made a successful career out of her writing. Her first book, *A Bouquet of Garden Writing*, focused on 20th-century garden writers such as Gertrude Jekyll, EA Bowles, William Robinson and Vita Sackville-West. "I read a huge amount for it, which meant I was pretty well up on what two generations before me had said about gardening." It was the perfect first book for a budding garden writer.

Her epoch-reflecting tome, *The English Garden*, is a meditation on what it means for a garden to be 'English'. The text is as well-crafted and enlightening as the photographs by the master of garden photography, Andrew Lawson. More recently, she has turned to social history. *A Green and Pleasant Land* is a lively study of how England's gardeners helped during the struggle of the Second World War.

"I've always written about gardening as part of life," she smiles. Humorous and opinionated, her columns have an honesty that makes them instantly appealing. "When I started as a journalist it seemed there was a place for something more lively and that connected all sorts of other subjects. I wanted to connect with people who didn't think about gardens all the time." Her articles often start with attention-grabbing sentences. Consider this one: 'There are many great reasons for not taking up gardening. It is a subject which comes with more baggage than the England cricket team.' Subject-wise, she cast her net wide, from weeding – 'a great stress-buster' – and compost to reflections on gardening camaraderie and gardening as therapy. The common thread is herself. We learn from her own experiences and are left in no doubt of her opinions. Her mother-in-law once remarked: "There is a lot of you in this dear." That's the way Ursula wanted it.

A difficult childhood set her on the horticultural path. Ursula's father left the family home when she was small. "My mother brought up six of us in the country with not much money." Her mother was a keen gardener and so from a young age Ursula helped her out. "Gardening was an opportunity to spend time with my mum. Then she died when I was 15. Each of us had jobs to do in the house. My brother Ed and I took over the garden and it just developed from there."

She read History at Cambridge but carried on gardening. Her mother's friend, Valerie Finnis – of Waterperry fame – helped Ursula get her first job. And so, on her 21st birthday, Ursula started working at Little Haseley for interior designer Nancy Lancaster. "I had a wonderful summer. Nancy was such a flamboyant gardener." Fired by the experience, Ursula started a year's scholarship at RHS Garden Wisley. "In 1975 it was almost like a private garden. If you saw a visitor, you would actually say hello to them as they were so rare."

A year later she got a place at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, where she trained for three years and started writing articles for *Amateur Gardening* and other gardening magazines.

Newly married and qualified, Ursula moved to Cambridgeshire, where she got a job for the *Peterborough Evening Telegraph*. "That was my first regular spot as a journalist. Then in 1984 I sent an article to *The Spectator*. It was pure coincidence that the new editor was looking for a garden columnist." She makes it sound as though her success was down to luck, but her education and hard work played a huge part. "There's no such thing as a born writer," she confesses. "It took time to find my voice and learn the craft of it."

Ursula is currently writing a biography of her grandfather, the novelist, historian and politician John Buchan [whose bust sits on Ursula's desk, right], best known for his oft-filmed spy novel *The 39 Steps*. "I'm probably writing the hardest and most satisfying book in my life." Having given up her columns to focus on books, she still finds time to give talks on her favourite subjects – from fruit and veg gardening and cooking with garden produce to garden design and history. And she still writes the odd book review too."I look back at my career and think: 'Crickey that was fun'. I'm very lucky. And I'll carry on doing it until I peg out." □

USEFUL INFORMATION
You can find out more about Ursula's work and forthcoming publications at ursula-buchan.co.uk

NEXT MONTH Tree collector, Lord Howick.

> *"There's no such thing as a born writer. It took time to find my voice and learn the craft of it"*

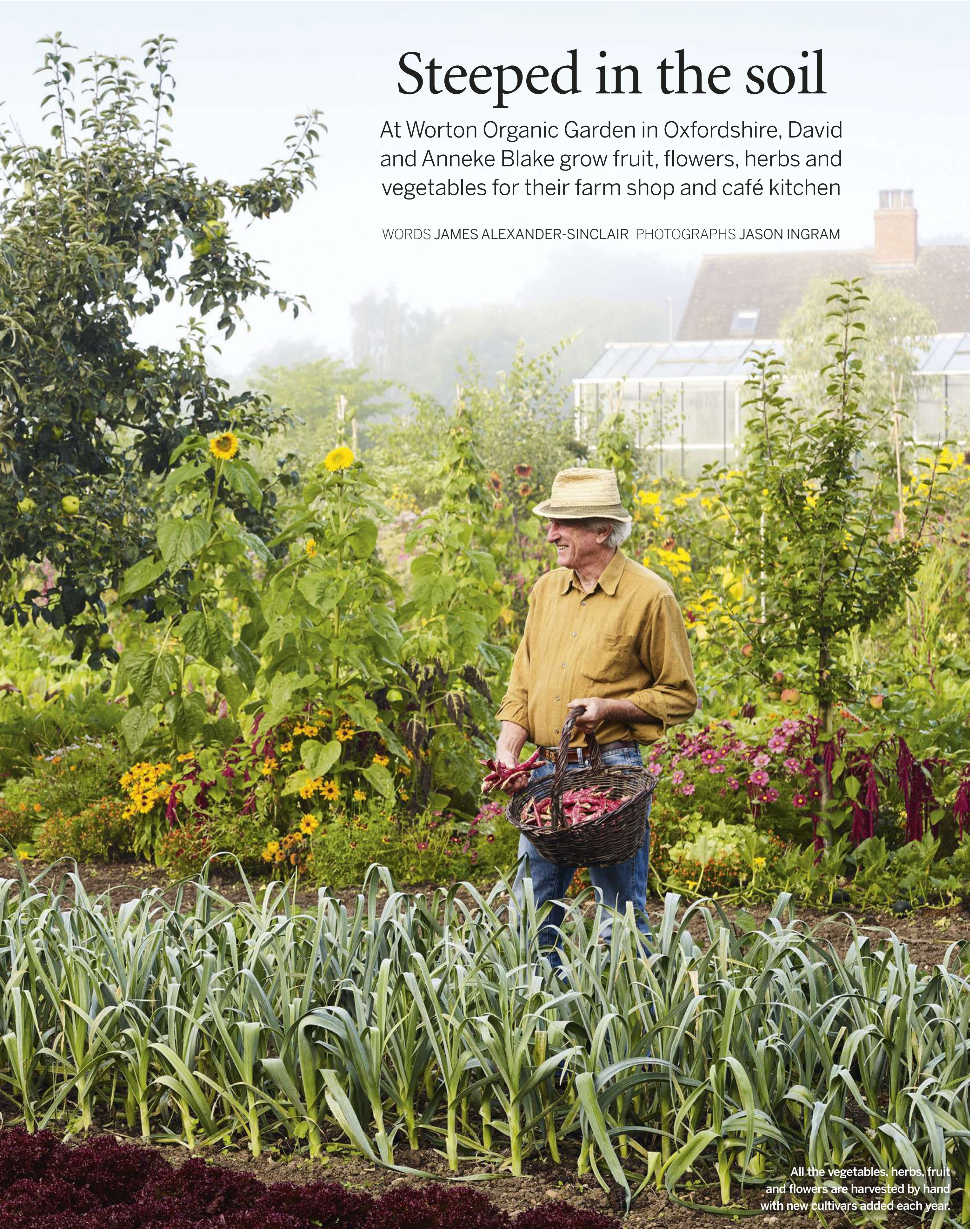
In brief

Name Worton Organic Garden.
What Market garden, supplying shop and restaurant.
Where Oxfordshire.
Size Seven acres.
Soil Clay loam.
Climate Sits in its own micro-climate protected from winds by a tall tree line on two sides.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.

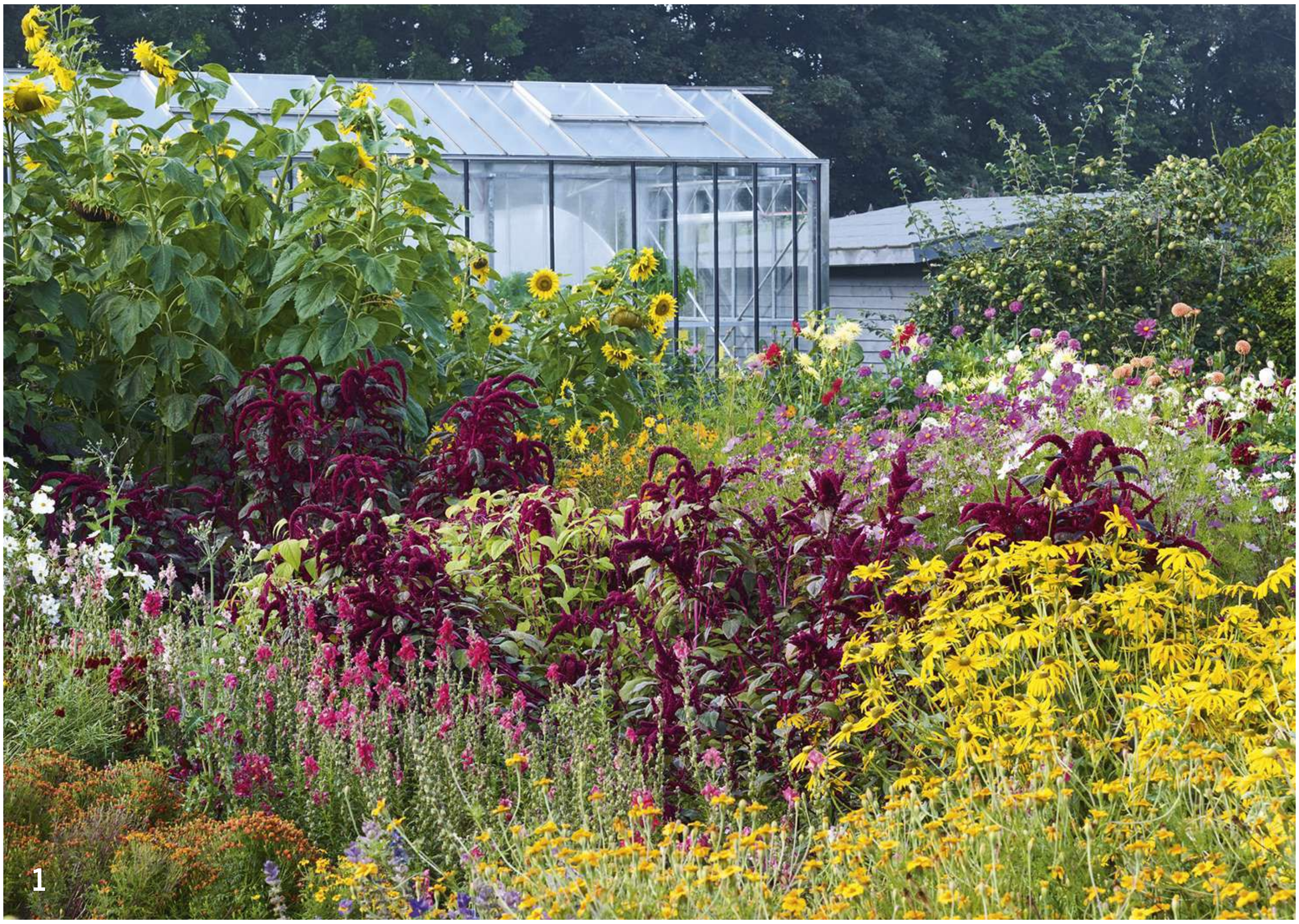
Steeped in the soil

At Worton Organic Garden in Oxfordshire, David and Anneke Blake grow fruit, flowers, herbs and vegetables for their farm shop and café kitchen

WORDS JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



All the vegetables, herbs, fruit and flowers are harvested by hand with new cultivars added each year.



1 Anneke finds the common dislike of yellow puzzling, as she loves it. It's also the dominant colour in her breathtaking flower borders, which are teeming with sunflowers, rudbeckias and marigolds. **2 Most of the phenomenal range of vegetables** grown at Worton Organic find their way into the shop, which is overseen by David, who frequently sports a jaunty hat. Alongside vegetables, the shop also sells Dutch cheeses, home-made organic sourdough bread and, on one Sunday each month, fresh fish. **3 While the vegetable garden is David's domain**, Anneke prefers to concentrate on growing flowers, including *Salvia* 'Amistad', which has velvety, dark-purple flowers held on almost-black calyces from May to November. **4 Anneke's yellow borders** feature some stunning and unusual combinations of plants, such as this broad-leafed *Ricinus communis* amid a sea of yellow tagetes. **5 Two antique rhubarb forcers** surrounded by an eclectic selection of plants, including the tall grass *Stipa gigantea*, mint in flower and *Verbascum* seedheads, line the path to the café.

I write this article with a heavy heart. If I write a glowing piece there is a distinct possibility that you lot will be moved to visit and buy stuff. That would mean that there was less left for me so the temptation is to say "Move along there, nothing to see." But that, sadly, would not only be impolite but selfish and I remember what my mother told me about sharing my toys. So may I introduce to you one of the absolute gems of Oxfordshire: Worton Organic Gardens, an unbelievably productive (and extraordinarily beautiful) garden surrounding a shop groaning with goodies and a practically perfect little café.

This is the purlieu of David and Anneke Blake both hailing from families steeped in the soil, all be it on opposite sides of the globe. David emigrated to Melbourne aged four and had an eclectic career as publican, music agent and bookseller before meeting Anneke in the Netherlands where her family ran a thriving smallholding in the same street as the renowned Dutch garden designer, the late Henk Gerritsen. It was he who put them in touch with the Oppenheimers at Waltham Place in Berkshire where they worked as gardeners at the beginning of the millennium.

A decade or so ago fate (and an advertisement in *Farmers Weekly*) brought them to Worton, where they found a field and a few polytunnels; within a season they had begun to transform it into a thriving garden. "You can make a vegetable garden very quickly," says David. "Vegetables are basically annuals." Over the years it has expanded and improved: initially selling produce at local markets and through a veg box scheme. They now have seven acres under cultivation – fields of fruit trees, avenues of raspberries and currants, polytunnels brimming with unusual salads, and rows and rows of beans, pumpkins, beetroot, spuds… you get the picture. Abundance in abundance and all of it planted and nurtured by David and a team of ever cheerful East Timorese gardeners.

In the middle of this is the shop and restaurant, stocked with an array of organic fruit and vegetables as well as the freshest of fish and great wheels of Dutch cheese – cow, ewe and goat – that bear no resemblance to the scarlet waxed slices of edam, most of us ▷

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Top tomatoes

At Worton they grow amazing tomatoes: so amazing that we have pretty much given up growing them ourselves in despair. David has what he calls 'sweet boxes' on his counter – these are punnets of many coloured and multi-flavoured, cherry-sized tomatoes. They are completely irresistible and they seldom last long in our house: I even have one on my desk. However, there are chunkier cultivars as well – this is a quick whisk through some of their favourites.

- **'Burke's Backyard'** – an Australian heritage tomato that David was initially reluctant to grow, but it has proved to be good.
- **'Caro Rich'** – hard skinned, which protects it from cracking. The flavour is similar to 'Melody' and it contains remarkably few seeds.
- **'Green Doctors'** – cherry sized, growing in amazingly bountiful trusses. Looks unripe, tastes divine.
- **'Green Giant'** – large with a great deep colour. Great sprinkled with either salt or sugar in a tomato salad.
- **'Indigo Beauty'** – one of the new wave American cultivars bred in Minnesota. Sweet with a dark, blue-black skin colour.
- **'Orange Banana'** – very pest resistant. Long trusses of extremely sweet fruit good for drying.
- **'Stupice'** – a small-to-medium-sized early tomato. Great in a salad – old-fashioned, 'pure tomato' taste. Originated in the Czech Republic.
- **'Sungold'** – gleaming yellow. Sweet and yet sharp at the same time. Really good for indoctrinating children into the joys of tomato eating.

Jairo and Fidel from East Timor, and Arnald from the Philippines help David cultivate the seven acres of fruit and vegetables.

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1 Anneke uses cut flowers from her borders to create artful displays, such as this mix of zinnias from the Benary's Giant Series, for the café. **2 Leeks and other staple** British veg grow alongside exotics from around the world. **3 The purple plumes of *Amaranthus* 'Hopi Red Dye'** add a dramatic contrast to the yellow *Rudbeckia hirta* 'Prairie Sun'. **4 Anneke grows masses of dahlias**, including this *Dahlia* 'Otto's Thrill'. **5 *L'arte di mangiar bene*** or the art of eating well perfectly sums up David and Anneke's philosophy. It's also the motto of their shop, which you reach by cutting through Anneke's deep borders with *Rudbeckia laciniata* 'Herbstsonne' and *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent' lining your path. **6 Borlotti beans provide a speckled** burst of colour. **7 Worton grows row and rows of unusual leaves**, including these relatively new Salanova lettuces. **8 David harvests a *Solanum melongena* 'Black Pearl',** an excellent aubergine that is well-suited to the British climate. **9 Although this pumpkin is known** as *Cucurbita maxima* 'Atlantic Giant' it's actually quite modest in size.

▷ can remember from childhood. It is all housed in a fabulous home-made shack that keeps expanding: while I was there Anneke was itching to go off and order wood for an extension. David runs the shop – eccentrically hatted with classical music booming and a glass of wine close at hand – and will always steer one towards what is particularly good that week. Anneke is an excellent, though sometimes reluctant, cook who is adept at combining very simple but invigorating flavours (often with a tinkle of Indonesia) although she would always rather be gardening.

"I hated gardening as a child," she admits. Even now she is pretty indifferent about growing vegetables – very much David's department – and prefers instead to concentrate on growing flowers. As you arrive at Worton Organic you are immediately greeted with long double borders that take your breath away – they are very yellow. "Some people are averse to yellow," explains a puzzled Anneke. "I find it a most uplifting colour full of joy. The Buddhists consider it the colour of the gateway to heaven." David chips in: "…and in music it is the colour of the trumpet". The beds are full of sunflowers, rudbeckias and marigolds, and in addition there are great swathes of dahlias, tulips, amaranthus and everything else you need for cutting.

I have now shared the secret and I trust that I will not be pushed out or deprived of my punnet of perfect tomatoes by a whole load of interloping visitors. By all means visit, soak up the atmosphere, admire the borders, coo at the chickens and scratch the pigs, but please don't eat everything. Thank you. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Worton Organic Garden, Worton, near Cassington, Oxfordshire OX29 4SU.
Tel 07718 518964.
Web wortonorganicgarden.com
Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday year round.

Turn the page for three delicious recipes from Worton Organic.

L'ARTE DI MANGIAR BENE

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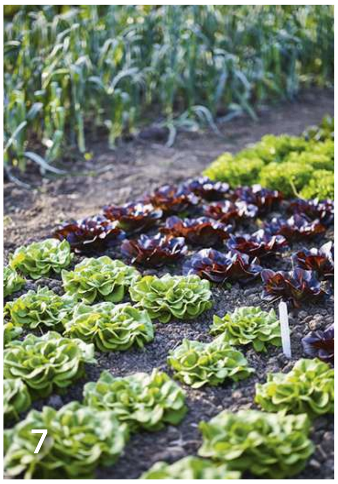

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Another of Anneke's displays featuring several cut flowers, including the dark-red *Dahlia* 'Karma Naomi', the peach-coloured *D.* 'Cornel Brons' and the claret-red *D.* 'Ivanetti'.

Worton tomato salad

- 3 or 4 different-coloured beefsteak tomatoes
- 1 large, or 2 small, shallots, finely sliced or diced
- Purple basil

For the dressing:

- 1tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 clove of garlic crushed
- 6tbsp sunflower oil
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of sugar

Cut the tomatoes horizontally, to expose their beautiful structure and arrange the slices in a nice and colourful way on the plate, scatter the chopped shallots, and pour the dressing over the tomatoes and shallots. Sprinkle the chopped basil on top and finish with a bit of freshly ground black pepper. Serve immediately.

BREAD & BUTTER PICKLES

Bread and butter pickles (makes approx 5-6 jars)

- 750g small gherkins
- 450g shallots
- 1 green bell pepper
- 50g salt

For the brine:

- 475ml cider vinegar
- 180g light brown sugar
- ½tsp turmeric powder
- ¼tsp ground cloves
- 1tbsp yellow mustard seeds
- ½tsp celery seeds

Slice the gherkins, shallots and pepper thinly and mix with the salt in a large bowl, cover and set aside for a minimum of 3 hours.

Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas 3. Prepare your jars, by washing in hot, soapy water and then place the wet jars upside down on a baking tray and place in the preheated oven for around 15 minutes to sterilise them.

Put all the brine ingredients in a non-reactive pan and bring to the boil, stirring occasionally to dissolve the sugar. Boil for 5 minutes. Drain the vegetables and rinse in cold water, drain again and add them to the hot brine. Reheat slowly to just below boiling point, stirring occasionally. Spoon the mixture into the warm, sterilised jars and seal with vinegar-proof lids.

The pickle is ready to eat immediately with cheese and a slice of rye sourdough – or any good bread – but if stored in a sealed jar it will keep for to up to a year.

Find more recipes from Worton Organic Gardens at **gardensillustrated.com**

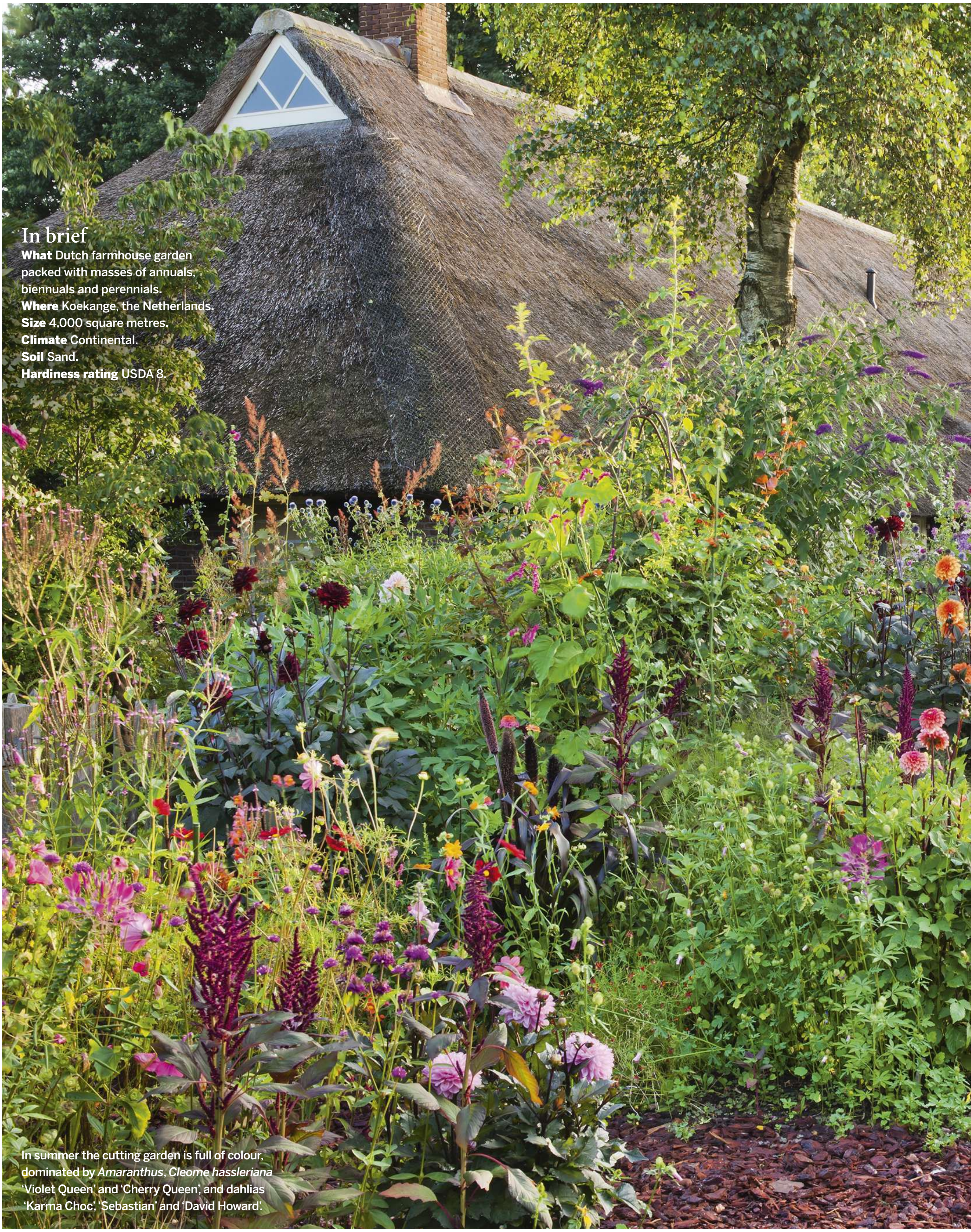
Plum and mulberry frangipane tart

For the pastry:
- **100g cold butter, cubed**
- **75g caster sugar**
- **1 egg, beaten**
- **200g plain flour, plus extra for dusting**
- **Pinch of salt**

For the filling:
- **170g butter, softened**
- **170g caster sugar**
- **2 eggs, beaten**
- **80g ground almonds**
- **40g plain flour**
- **40g self-raising flour**
- **300g plums**
- **300g mulberries**

First make the pastry. Beat the butter with the sugar and a pinch of salt until white. Add the beaten egg and fold in the flour gently. Let it rest for an hour or so and then roll out the pastry and line a 28cm round, loose- bottomed, fluted tart tin. Let it rest again for 30 minutes. Bake blind for 25 minutes in a preheated oven at 180°C/Gas 4. Take out the baking beans and bake for another 5 to 10 minutes, then turn the oven down slightly to around 170°C/Gas 3.

In the meantime make the filling. Beat the butter and sugar in an electric mixer until white. Add the ground almonds, plain flour and self-raising flour and eggs. Cut the plums in half and remove the stones. Fill the tart case with the frangipane mixture and put the plums, cut side up, gently on top. Scatter the mulberries around the plums. Bake in the preheated oven for 40 minutes.



In brief

What Dutch farmhouse garden packed with masses of annuals, biennuals and perennials.
Where Koekange, the Netherlands.
Size 4,000 square metres.
Climate Continental.
Soil Sand.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.

In summer the cutting garden is full of colour, dominated by *Amaranthus*, *Cleome hassleriana* 'Violet Queen' and 'Cherry Queen', and dahlias 'Karma Choc', 'Sebastian' and 'David Howard'.

Eclectic palette

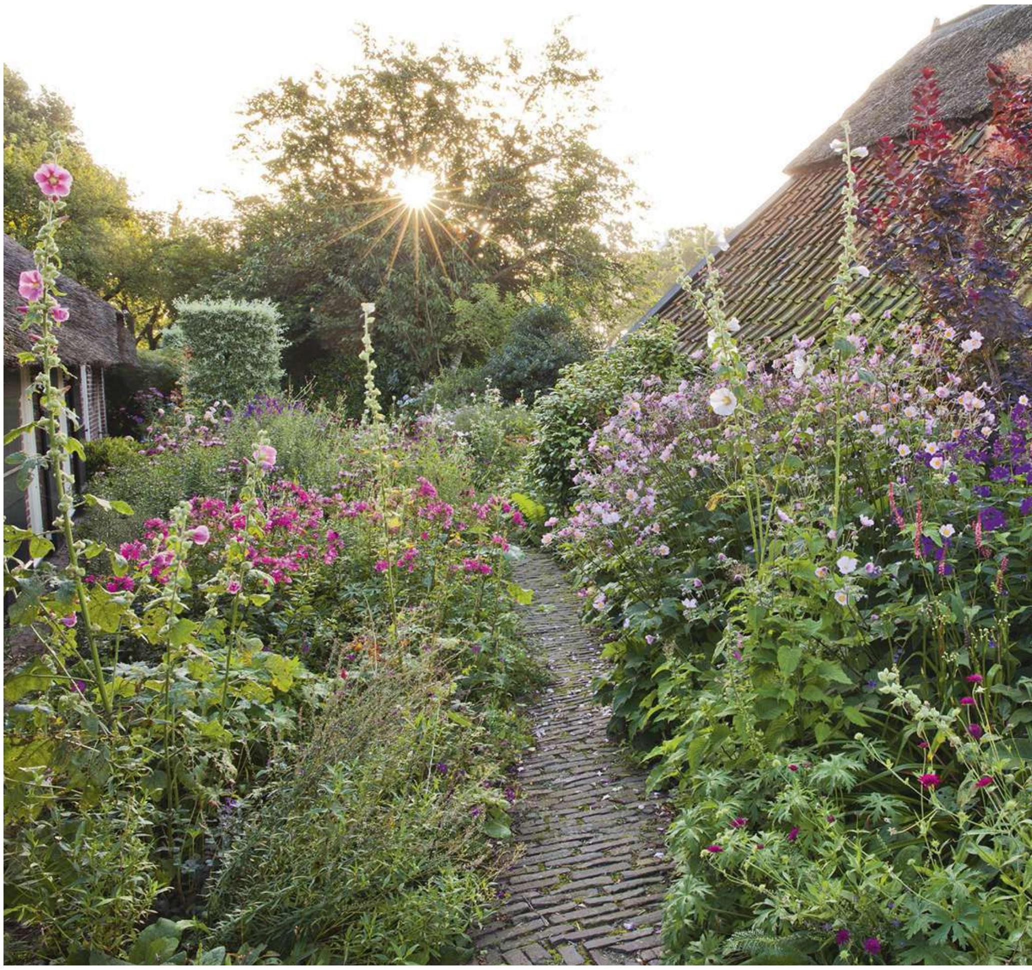
At first sight Joke Kuiperij's garden seems the epitome of a cottage garden but beyond the chestnut fencing this artfully managed delight is a surprising mixture of styles

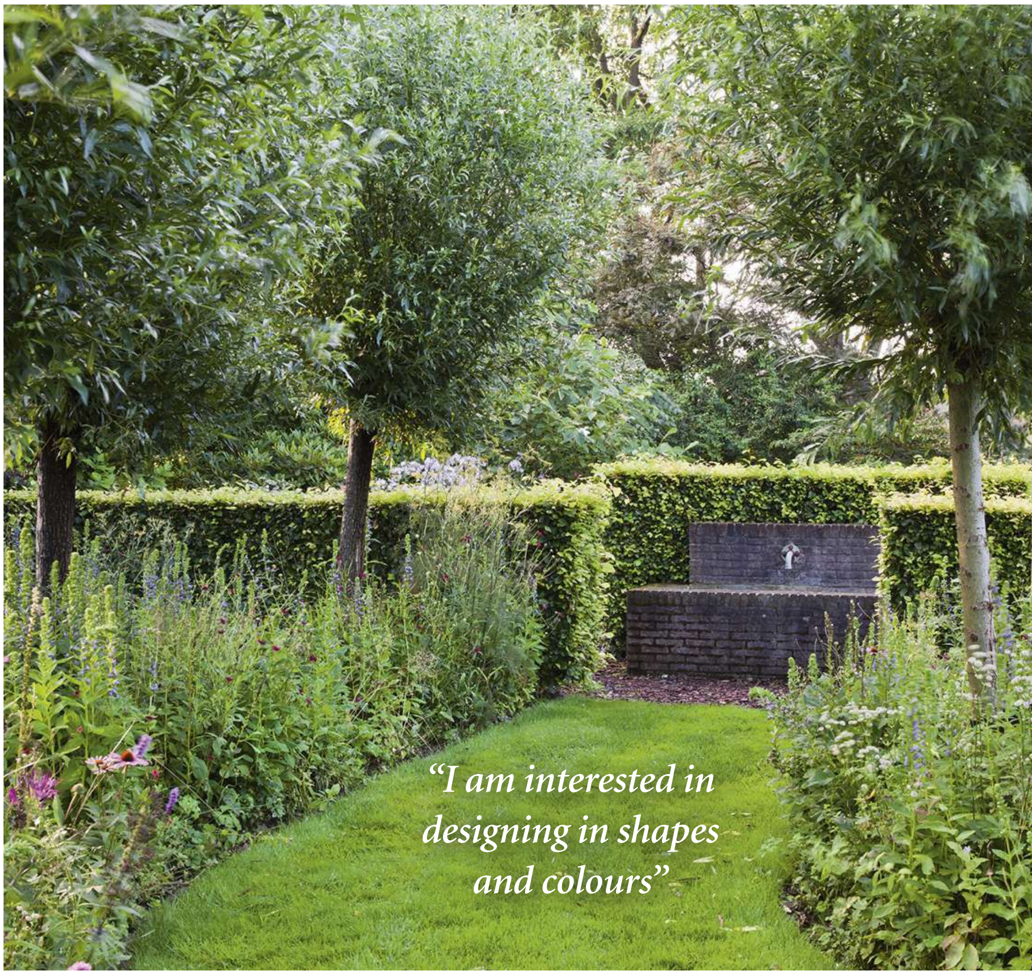
WORDS **ROMKE VAN DE KAA** PHOTOGRAPHS **ROBERT MABIC**

You could describe Joke Kuiperij's garden as a cottage garden, except that's not a really term we use in the Netherlands. Her garden has more than enough hollyhocks, foxgloves, dahlias and phlox to earn the English epithet, and her thatched house, though not strictly a cottage but a former farmhouse, would probably satisfy most people's bucolic dream. But you could, and should, call it a happy garden – a feeling enhanced by the many annuals, which in summer constantly hum with bees.

It's also a tranquil garden, which is just what Joke [pronounced yo-ke] and her late husband Karel Huyts were looking for when they moved here from the nearby town of Meppel in 1981. The couple had fallen for the farmhouse, with its low-thatched roof and picturesque barn, and loved its old apple orchard and surrounding meadows full of buttercups. At the time both had demanding jobs, so they hired a garden designer who laid out some brick paths and created rather conventional borders with mock orange and phlox near the house. Then Joke became interested in plants. She started reading garden books and visiting gardens – she especially remembers the borders at Hadspen House in Somerset – and was soon growing plants from seed. She was hooked.

For years Joke would order 15 packets of seed each year, sow half the contents and swap the other half with a friend who did the same, meaning both acquired 30 new plants. ▷





"I am interested in designing in shapes and colours"

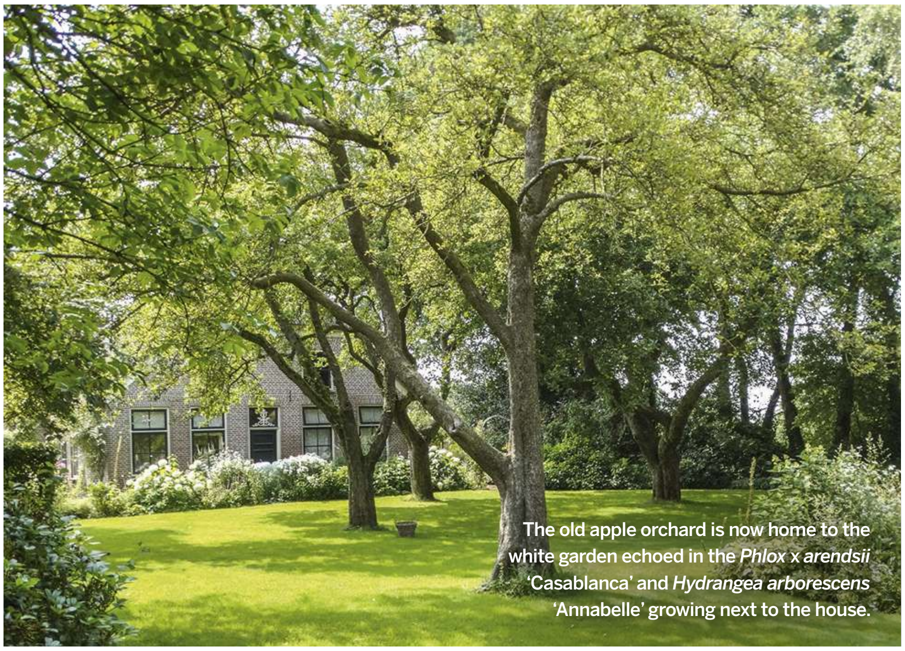
Clockwise from top left

The narrow brick path between house and barn is overflowing with annuals and perennials, including *Knautia macedonica*, *Persicaria amplexicaulis* Orange Field (= 'Orangofield') and *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* 'Neubulach'.

At the centre of the farm's original orchard Joke has created an elegant white garden with plants such as *Clematis* 'Alba Luxurians' and *Rosa* The Charlatan (= 'Meiguimov') are surrounded by box.

Chestnut fencing surrounds the cutting garden, although Joke concedes it is more ornamental than useful in keeping out hungry rabbits.

A brick water trough marks the end of the Willow Walk where pollarded *Salix alba* are underplanted with perennials, including *Echinacea purpurea,* and an abundance of *Lobelia* x *speciosa* 'Vedrariensis'.



The old apple orchard is now home to the white garden echoed in the *Phlox* x *arendsii* 'Casablanca' and *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle' growing next to the house.

AB ABERSON

▷ Now Joke harvests her own seeds from her stock of more than 200 annuals and biennials, sowing a selection each year and selling the surplus seed to garden visitors.

Over the years the garden has grown organically, but not haphazardly. "I am interested in designing, in shapes and colours, and for me it is essential to draw everything first on paper," says Joke. Among the areas she and Karel created in this way is a shade garden full of big-leaved eye catchers, such as *Aralia californica*, *Fatsia japonica*, various rodgersias, and a great clump of *Osmunda regalis*. In spring erythroniums and trilliums grow beneath a paperbark maple, *Acer griseum*.

From the shade garden you enter the Willow Walk. The original idea was to create a meadow garden beneath the willows, but the season was too short, so instead Joke and Karel planted a mixture of low-growing ornamental grasses, including *Briza media*, annual poppies, biennual foxgloves and perennials, such as *Echinacea* and *Campanula lactiflora*. To stop the campanulas becoming too dominant, Joke digs some up at the end of the season so the poppies and foxgloves can happily self-seed in the spaces she creates. Although the Willow Walk looks deceptively natural, it takes a lot of management. It is a subtle balance of clever direction and simply letting nature take its course.

The Willow Walk leads to a fenced-off cutting garden – although the chestnut fencing is largely ornamental. "Cats jump the fence and rabbits squeeze through it," laughs Joke. The cutting garden is full of dahlias and annuals. From here you can look out over the surrounding meadowland. "I don't like the idea of garden rooms," says Joke. "The hedges in this garden aren't used to enclose, but to hide a surprise and give direction."

A narrow border running along the back of the house leads to the orchard in which Joke has designed a white garden, enclosed by a circle of box. Here, the pure-white of most flowers is enhanced by the single-flowered *Rosa* The Charlatan (='Meiguimov'), which opens pink and fades to almost white.

The garden's only downside is its sandy soil, which necessitates frequent watering. "If I had to start all over again, I would start by designing an adequate watering system, with points everywhere, so I wouldn't have to drag hose pipes around," says Joke.

Seven years ago, Joke's husband Karel died suddenly. "At first I lost all interest in gardening," she says. "But friends helped me through the first year. Slowly I regained my interest in gardening. I have help now with mowing lawns and cutting hedges, but it remains very much my own garden." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Stationsweg 10, 7958RX Koekange, the Netherlands.
Tel +31 (0)522 451954.
Web detuinvan.nl
Open Sundays, June to August, 10am-5pm, and at other times by appointment.

8 of Joke Kuiperij's favourite plants

1 *Allium senescens*
Late flowering for an allium, from May to August. Not spectacular, but very easy on sandy soil and loved by a host of bees and butterflies. Prefers full sun. 15cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b†.

2 *Lobelia* x *speciosa* 'Vedrariensis'
A tall, majestic perennial that will need some support. Its purple flowers look fabulous against a background of bright-yellow rudbeckias, although it is best grown in damp borders. 90cm. RHS H5, USDA 4b-9b.

3 *Dahlia* 'Sebastian'
A stunning dahlia, with ball-shaped flower heads and petals that fade in a fascinating way from almost orange at the centre to a coral-pink at the tips. 40cm.

4 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Rubinstern'
An old cultivar, but one of the most reliable by far. Classic shape of flower. Keeps itself going by self seeding. 90cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

5 *Lobelia* x *speciosa* 'Tania'
Upright lobelia with purple-tinged leaves and stems and vivid magenta flower spikes. It's not reliably perennial, but is easy to grow from seed. 90cm. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

6 *Monarda punctata* 'Bee Bop'
A lovely aromatic herb with subtly coloured bracts. Not very perennial, but easily grown from seed. 90cm. USDA 5a-10b.

7 *Echinops ritro*
Loved by bees and butterflies, and with a unique flower shape. Good plant for difficult situations and poor soils. 90cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

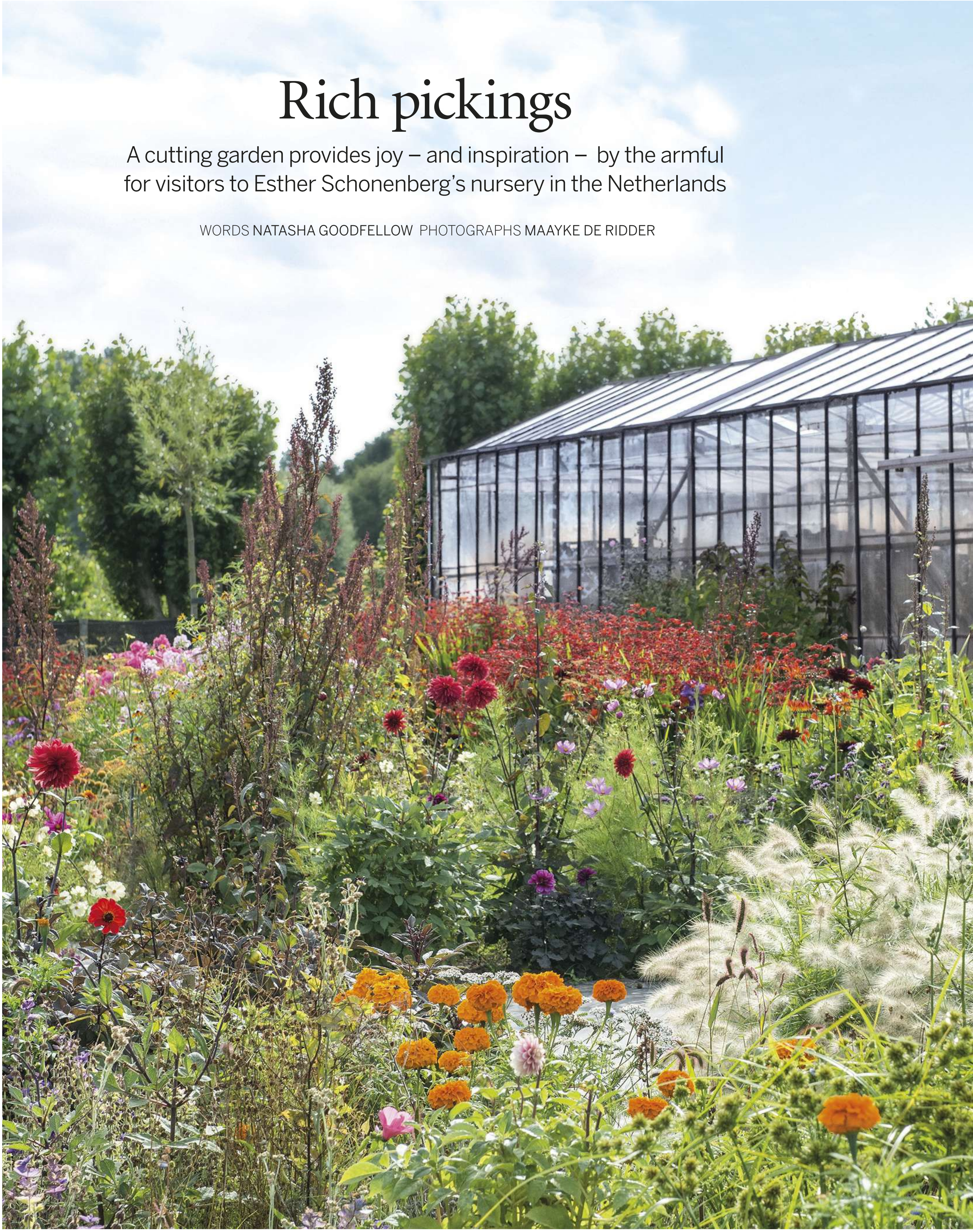
8 *Hibiscus trionum*
The cream flowers open only for a very short time, but the seedheads, which appear at the same time as the flowers, persist. An interesting annual. 90cm. RHS H2.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

Rich pickings

A cutting garden provides joy – and inspiration – by the armful for visitors to Esther Schonenberg's nursery in the Netherlands

WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW** PHOTOGRAPHS **MAAYKE DE RIDDER**



The cutting garden is glorious in August, and an irresistible pull to customers keen to discover new plants and create their own bouquets.

Walk into the main greenhouse and sales space of Festina Lente, Esther Schonenberg's beautiful nursery just outside Leiden in the Netherlands, in August, and you're greeted by an unusual sight. Yes, there are rustic pallets brimming with pots and trays of beautiful plants; yes, there's an irresistible view over the garden beyond and, yes, there are deep bowls of bulbs with which to plan imaginative spring displays – but there's something more too. On the countertop are vases bursting with stunning displays of cut flowers. They're not for sale. It's even better than that – they are there to encourage you to pick your own bouquet in the cutting garden outside.

"People always come back smiling from the cutting garden," says Esther. And well they might; who wouldn't enjoy an hour spent gathering armfuls of dahlias, crocosmias, phlox, cosmos, nicotianas, salvias, persicaria and tagetes? For some, the joy is in the simple act of picking. For others it's the amazement of finding such a colourful and floriferous garden this late in the season. And for others still, it's the delight of discovering a plant they didn't know. "Every year we plant 20 or 30 new varieties," says Esther, "so there are always surprises."

Esther first began growing plants in 2001, having started a business running workshops making plant-based decorations. "I couldn't find any interesting flowers that I wanted to use, so I sowed some annuals to see what would happen." She quickly realised she enjoyed this far more than the workshops and so, having brought in her good friend and equally keen gardener Joke Durieux to help, the nursery was born.

Though annuals were – and remain – their first love, thanks to their long flowering time and the 'sparkle' and excitement they bestow on the garden, the pair soon discovered that many gardeners have eyes only for perennials and so added these to the mix, still with an eye for the unusual, the deliciously fragrant, long-flowering or rare. After six years renting space from a dahlia farmer (who still takes cuttings of his unique crosses for them each year) they moved to their current site in 2010, and renamed the business Festina Lente. "It's Latin for 'make haste slowly'," explains Esther. "It reflects the way we work, naturally and without pesticides or artificial growing media."

The plants may grow at their own pace but Esther and Joke are always busy with plans and ideas. On moving in, their first priority was to plant the garden that they'd always dreamed of. "We wanted to be able to show our customers mature plants in a garden setting and in interesting combinations," says Esther. Thanks to their efforts, August, a month when many gardens begin to plateau, sees it at its height.

"We find that many people will only buy plants when they're in flower," says Joke. "And that most buy their plants in spring, keen to have their gardens looking good after winter." Inevitably, this means that after an early summer peak, they begin to decline, especially if their owners then go on holiday in late June or July. It also means that many later-flowering plants, particularly annuals, which flower and then die in a single season, never get a look in at all. Happily, Esther has some simple solutions: "Visit nurseries at different times of year," she ▷

On the nursery lawn plants for sale, including *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Dazzler', *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Purity' and *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune' are arranged in combinations to inspire.

▷ says. "Choose plants with a long flowering period. Plant annuals, dahlias, salvias and grasses to add interest throughout the year, and cut back early flowering plants to encourage a second flush."

It's a formula that brings spectacular results in the Festina Lente garden, where imposing stands of grasses – molinias, stipas and panicums – and statuesque perennials – veronicastrums, eupatoriums, *Helianthus salicifolius* and loosestrifes – form the backbone of the colour-themed plantings, with annuals, biennials and perennials swapped in to keep things interesting. Once autumn-planted wallflowers have gone over in late May or early June, then eschscholzias or salvias might take their place. In August, the strong colours of dahlias and atriplex catch the eye, along with clouds of nicotiana and cosmos, with asters waiting in the wings to take over the display as they fade.

"The garden is an investment for us," says Esther. "When people come to visit several times a season, they see what is possible in a garden and, maybe, they decide to make some changes in their own garden." "Not all of them know what they see," laughs Joke, "but they do see what they're missing." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Festina Lente tuin, 1st Avenue Mient 13, 2223 LG Katwijk, the Netherlands.

Website festinalentetuin.nl

Open 4 March to 14 October, Thursday to Saturday, 10am-5pm.

Turn the page for planting combinations

8 of Esther and Joke's favourites

1 *Alonsoa meridionalis* 'Apricot'
A late-flowering annual with delicate flowers and colour. "It's a shame it doesn't flower earlier, as so few people see it," says Esther. 60cm. USDA 9a-11.

2 *Peucedanum verticillare*
"This grows so strong you can park your bike against it," laughs Esther. Sometimes flowers in its second or third year, then dies. 2m. USDA 5a-9a.

3 *Agastache nepetoides* 'Green Candles'
A short-lived perennial that's great for winter structure. "It's a good colour and seems to fit in anywhere," says Esther. 1.5m.

4 *Hibiscus cannabinus*
A tall, relatively unknown annual smothered in flowers from late July onwards. "It's a big hit in the cutting garden," says Esther, "but the blooms fade quickly." 1.8m. USDA 9a-11.

5 *Gaillardia* x *grandiflora* 'Burgunder'
This short-lived perennial flowers from late April to the first frosts. Pretty pincushion seedheads follow the burgundy flowers. 60cm. USDA 3a-9b.

6 *Tagetes patula* seed selection
African marigolds are often looked down upon, but this long flowering form, with tall stems supporting single, red flowers, never disappoints. Half-hardy annual. 45cm. USDA 2a-11.

7 *Agrostis nebulosa*
An annual grass that never fails to amaze with how it can produce such an imposing cloud from one tiny seed. 45cm.

8 *Anemonopsis macrophylla*
"I love these like my babies," laughs Joke. "They're good in shade and have such wonderful structure. Beautiful flowers and buds too." 1m. USDA 4a-9b.

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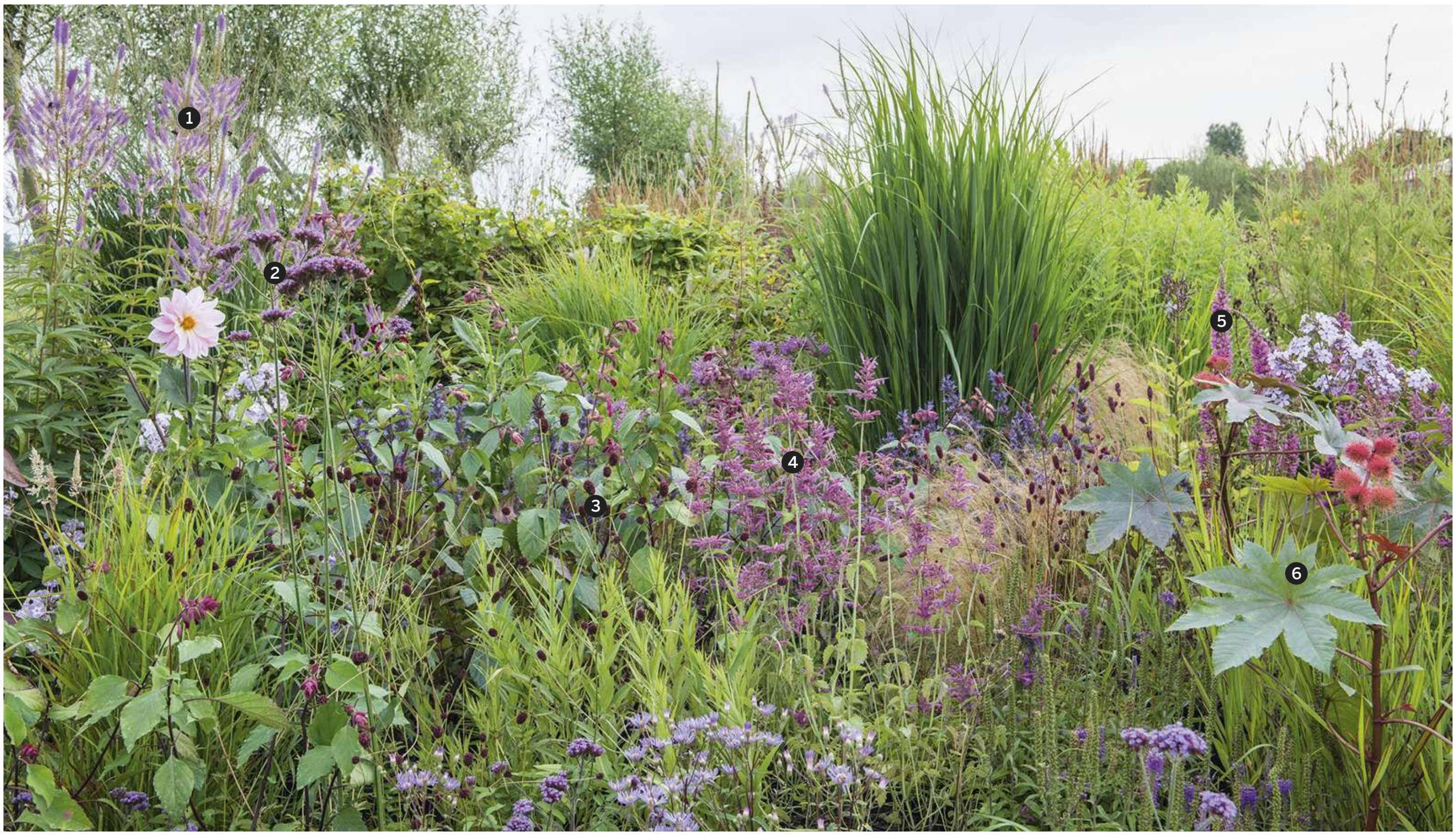
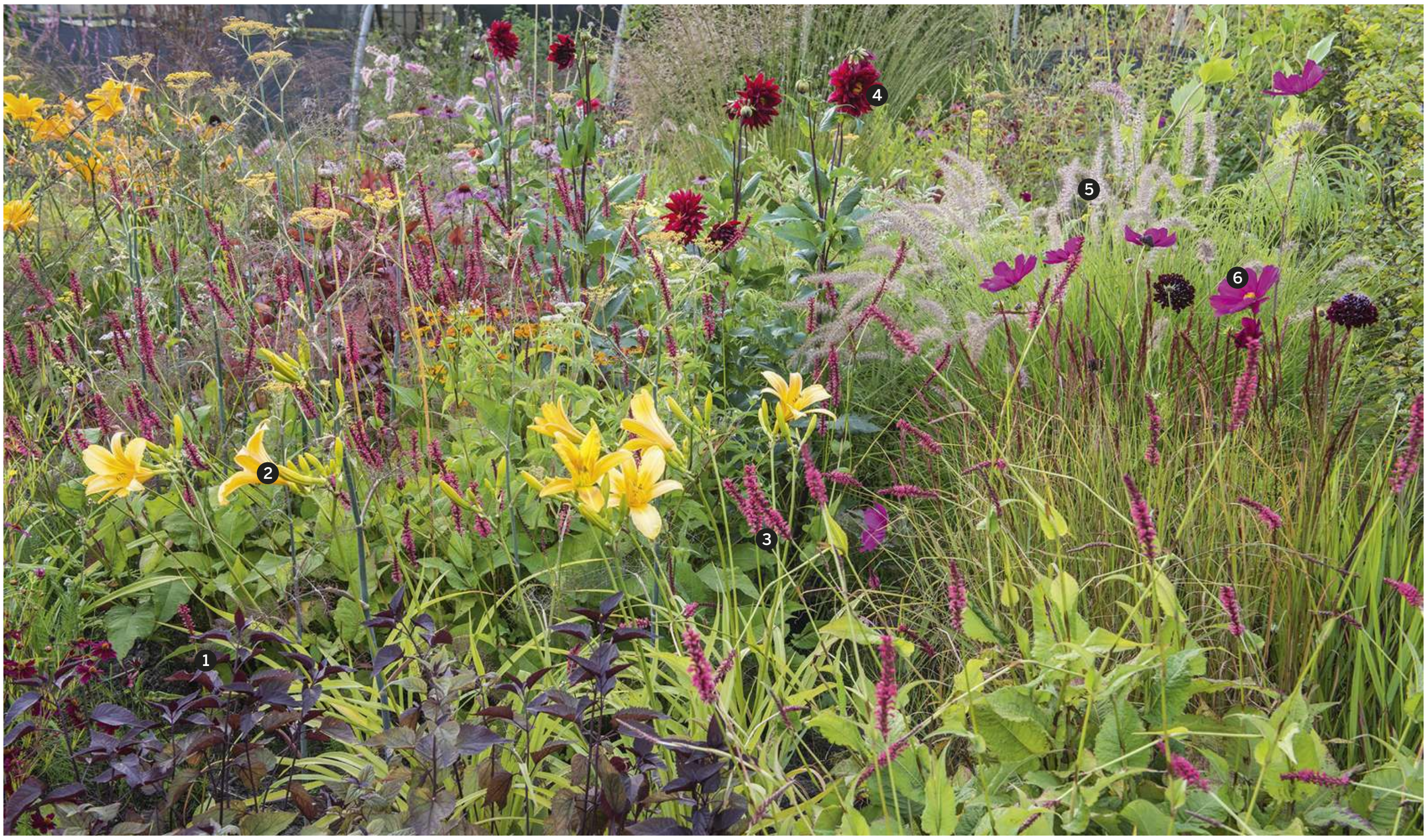
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

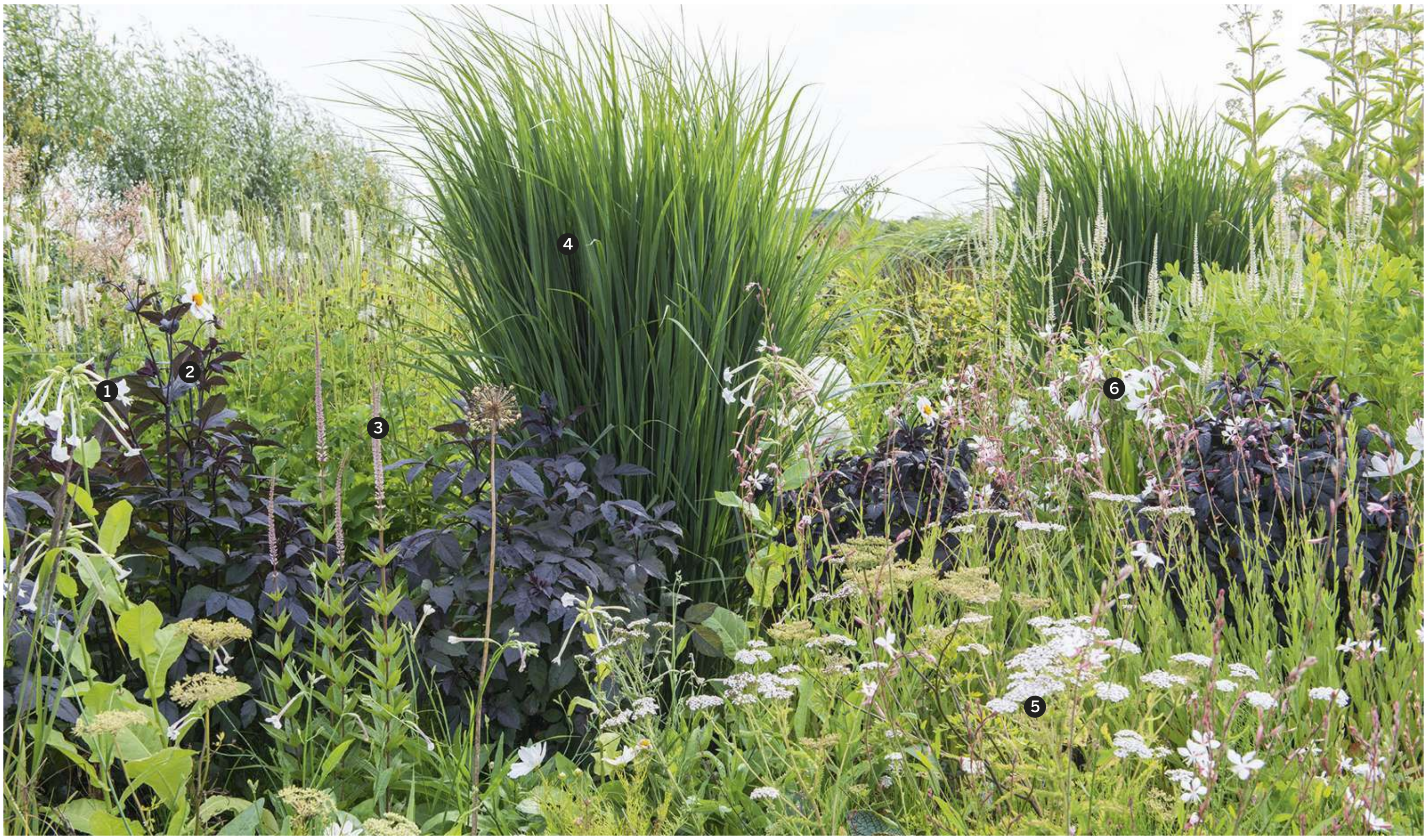
Combinations for late-summer planting



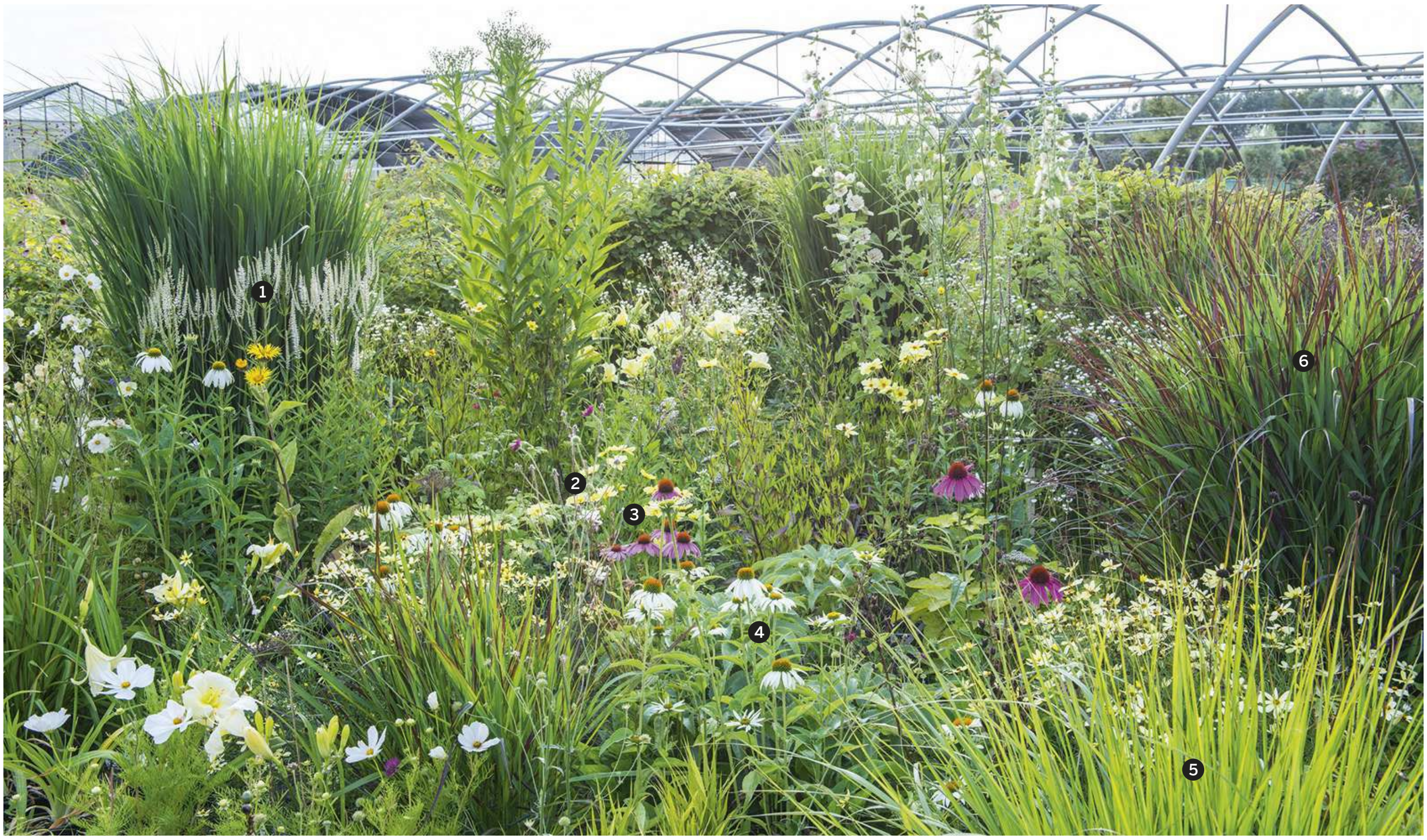
Purple haze Similarly coloured plants of differing heights create movement. Both ***Veronicastrum virginicum*** **'Fascination' (1)** and ***Verbena bonariensis*** **(2)** are tall and the first to catch the eye, while the mid-height, burgundy buttons of ***Sanguisorba*** **'Beetlewings' (3)** and pink spires of ***Agastache*** **'Tutti-frutti' (4)** lead the eye across the border. ***Lythrum salicaria*** **'Morden Pink' (5)** and the shapely leaves and pompom flowers of ***Ricinus communis*** **(6)** add spikes and balls of colour.



Hot shots This border offers a full-on sensory experience in fiery colours, including ***Eupatorium rugosum*** **'Chocolate' (1)**, ***Hemerocallis*** **'Burning Daylight' (2)**, the glowing spears of ***Persicaria amplexicaulis*** **'Firedance' (3)** and one of Esther and Joke's own dahlia selections, as yet unnamed **(4)**. The smoky panicles of ***Pennisetum orientale*** **'Karley Rose' (5)** provide a softer counterpoint, and a muted backdrop, against which the neon-pink petals of ***Cosmos bipinnatus*** **'Dazzler'(6)** glow.



Shadow play Light and shade are key to this border's success, with dense grasses and deep foliage contrasting with pale, delicate, flower heads. ***Nicotiana sylvestris*** **(1)**, ***Dahlia*** **'Twynings After Eight' (2)** and ***Veronicastrum virginicum*** **'Pink Glow' (3)** shine out, while ***Panicum virgatum*** **'Northwind' (4)** creates a darker block. ***Achillea millefolium*** **'White Beauty' (5)** and ***Gaura lindheimeri*** **(6)** add further elements of lightness.



Tutti frutti Strong clumps of tall grasses form the bones of this border, with a generous peppering of flowers to provide some colour. These include ***Veronicastrum virginicum*** **'Diane' (1)**, the yellow ***Coreopsis*** **'Full Moon' (2)**, ***Echinacea purpurea*** **(3)** and ***Echinacea purpurea*** **'Wild Swan' (4)**. Grasses are included in a variety of greens from the bright ***Pennisetum alopecuroides*** **'Magic' (5)** to the red-tinged ***Panicum virgatum*** **'Squaw' (6)**.

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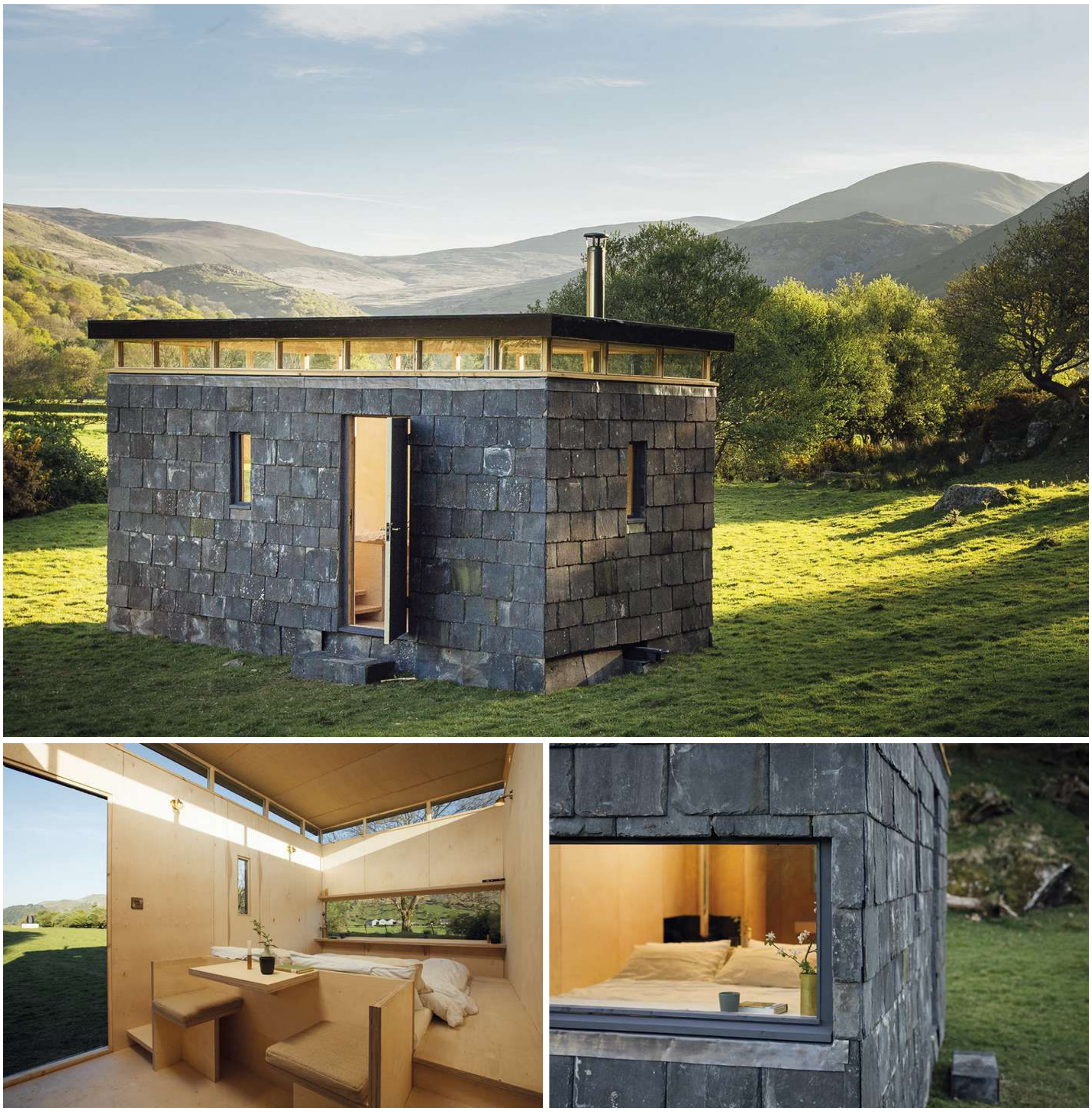
design

Design update, ideas and sourcebook

UPDATE COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**



GLAMPING

Legendary stays

This slate cabin on the Llyn Peninsula in Gwynedd, is one of eight winning designs from a competition to create a glamping cabin inspired by the mythologies or traditions of Wales. Designed by Jonathon Donnelly and Jennifer McMaster, who took their inspiration from Wales's stone cairns, the cabin sleeps two and is available to hire until 11 September. Other designs on the pop-up glampsite include a quirky dragon's eye and a cylindrical tower, clad in scale-like shingles. Prices start at £425 for two nights. **epicretreats.wales**

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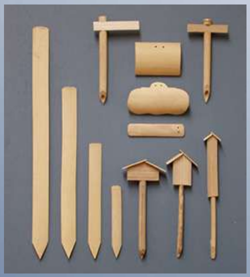

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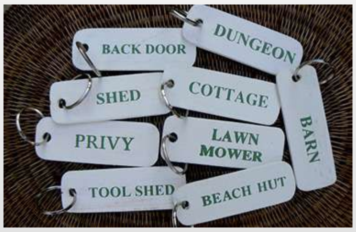
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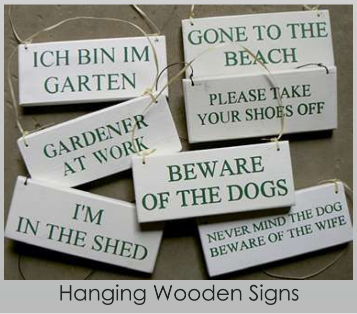
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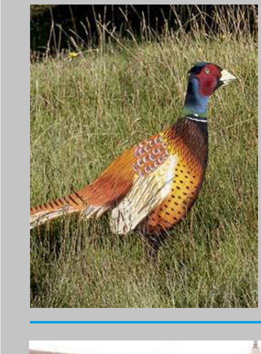

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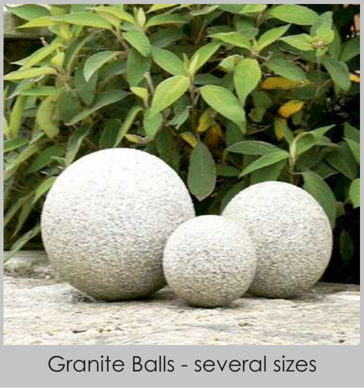

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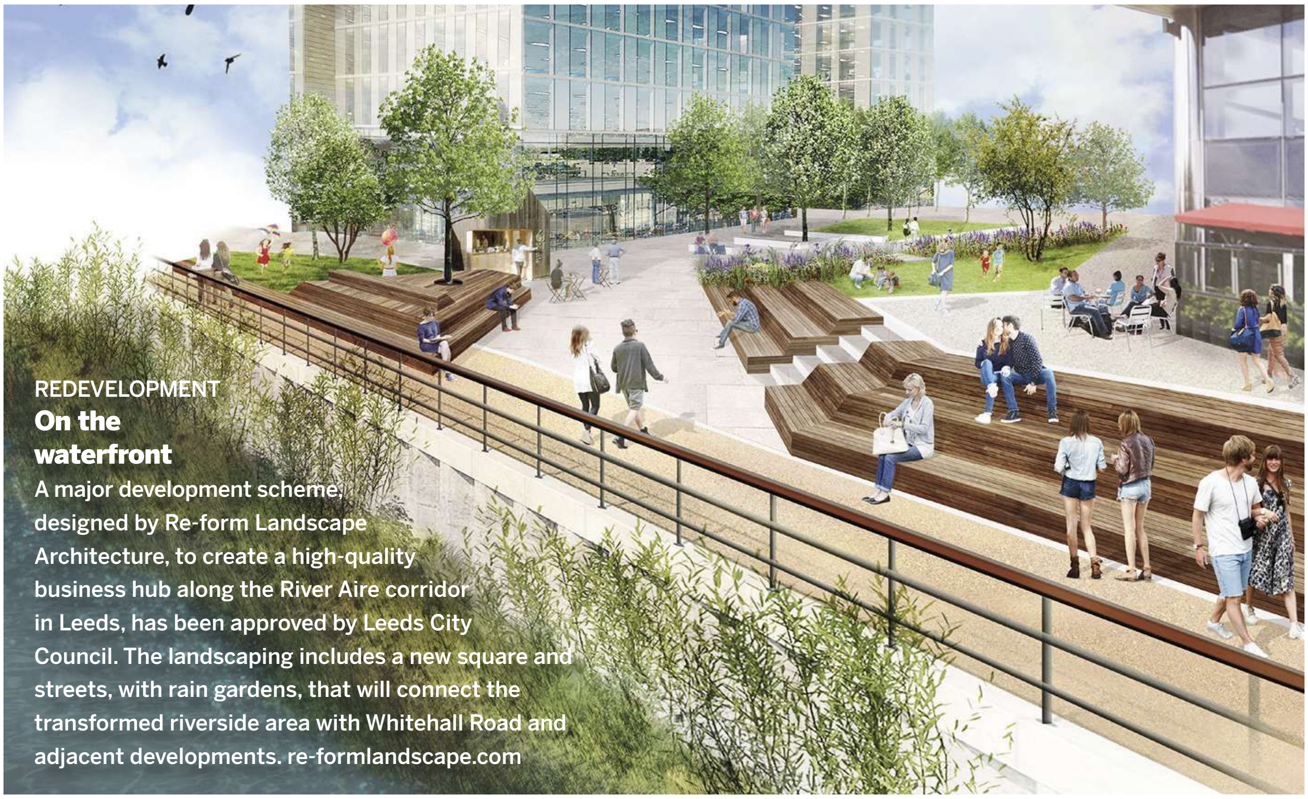
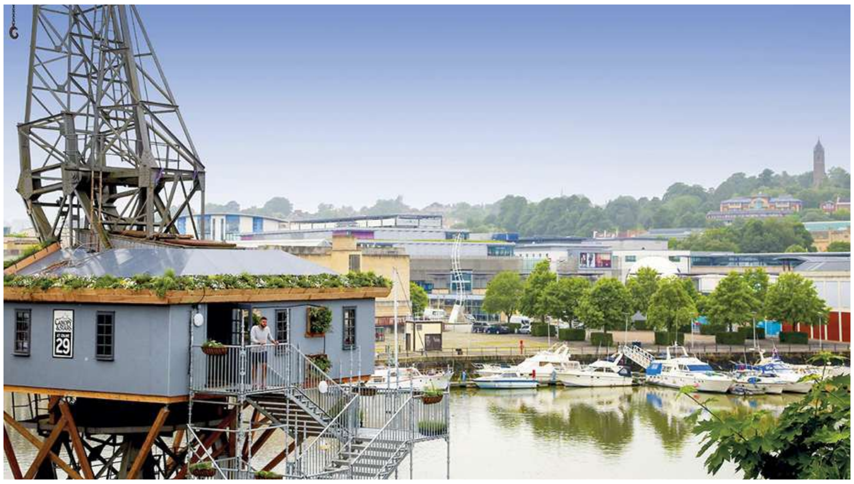


REDEVELOPMENT

On the waterfront

A major development scheme, designed by Re-form Landscape Architecture, to create a high-quality business hub along the River Aire corridor in Leeds, has been approved by Leeds City Council. The landscaping includes a new square and streets, with rain gardens, that will connect the transformed riverside area with Whitehall Road and adjacent developments. re-formlandscape.com



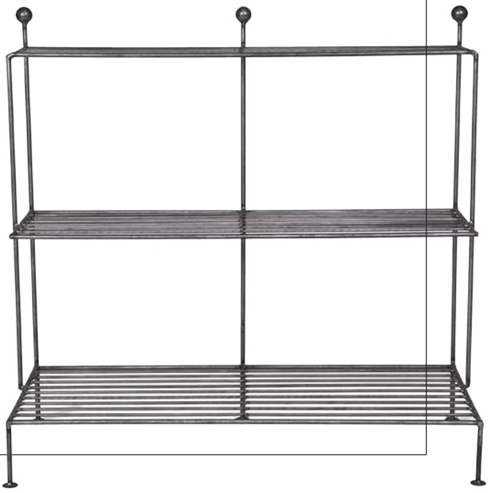
GLAMPING

High life

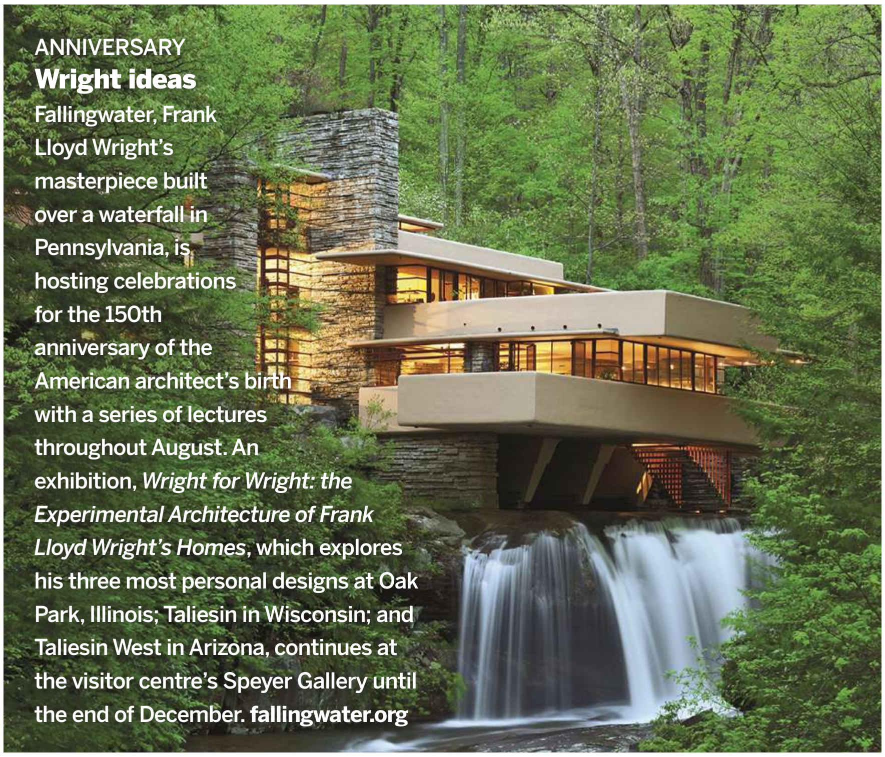
If Welsh glamping sounds too tame, Sawday's Canopy & Stars has an alternative out-of-the-way destination for you to try. Known for its range of unusual – and often remote – eco-friendly retreats, the UK holiday company has created a temporary treehouse, built high on a cargo crane on Bristol's Harbourside. The carbon-neutral building, made with sustainable materials, is designed to attract pollinators from its green roof and planted side panels, and provides unique accommodation for two people. **canopyandstars.co.uk/crane29**

THREE EASY STEPS

The new, three-tiered Barrington Plant Stand, from Garden Trading, is an elegant solution for displaying pots of different sizes. Made from steel, with a matt lacquer finish, it's ideal for use outdoors or in a conservatory or sun room. It is 78cm tall and 77cm wide. £85. Tel 01993 845559; gardentrading.co.uk



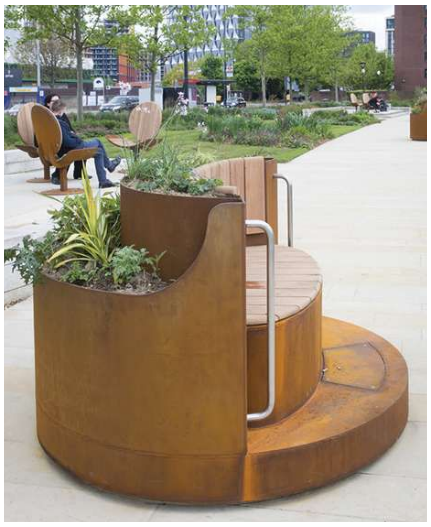
RE-FORM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, GEOFF CADDICK AND IRIS THORSTEINSDOTTIR



ANNIVERSARY

Wright ideas

Fallingwater, Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece built over a waterfall in Pennsylvania, is hosting celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the American architect's birth with a series of lectures throughout August. An exhibition, *Wright for Wright: the Experimental Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright's Homes*, which explores his three most personal designs at Oak Park, Illinois; Taliesin in Wisconsin; and Taliesin West in Arizona, continues at the visitor centre's Speyer Gallery until the end of December. **fallingwater.org**



PARK

Sun track

Designer Tord Boontje has created a collection of rotating seats alongside Riverside Gardens, a new pocket park on the south bank of the Thames, near Vauxhall at one of the artist JMW Turner's favourite painting locations. Two clusters of three rotating seats, and three planted benches made from Corten steel and cumaru wood, allow people to track the sun, from sunrise to sunset. Churchman Landscape Architects created the planting plans for the seats and for the park, which has been filled with perennials and bulbs. **tordboontje.com**

DESIGN SERVICE

Garden planning

If you're looking for inspiration for a new garden, paving company Bradstone has commissioned award-winning designer Paul Hervey-Brookes to create a series of design packs you can download for free from its website. Offering a range of different styles, from New York roof garden and urban to a contemporary gallery-inspired garden and Georgian-style town garden (shown right), the packs include layout and site plans, planting plans, paving suggestions and ideas for accessories, such as seating and lighting. **bradstone.com/inspiration**

Notebook

- Enjoy an evening with plantsman and garden designer Roger Platts at his seven-acre private garden and nursery near Edenbridge in Kent. Roger will give a talk on the **Principles of Garden Design** followed by a tour of his garden and exclusive access to the nursery in aid of Perennial, the charity dedicated to helping people who work in horticulture. 8 August, 6-8.30pm, £55. perennial.org.uk
- Understand more about the garden design process and gain confidence in creating your own designs with this one-day **Introduction to Garden Design** course. 19 August, 10am-4pm, £95. The Cotswold Gardening School, Gossington Hall, Gossington, GL2 7DN. Tel 01453 899018, cotswoldgardeningschool.co.uk
- Pre-booking is essential for the first NGS opening of **Wudston House** in Wedhampton, Wiltshire, where formal gardens have been developed around the house since its completion in 2010. There is also a perennial meadow established with the help of expert James Hitchmough, a pinetum and arboretum. 27 August, 2-5pm. Tel 01483 211535; ngs.org.uk
- Reserve your place on the **Garden Museum** visit to two gardens in Essex – Ulting Wick Garden and Furzelea – to see late-summer colour and inventive plant combinations. 6 September, £125 (£95 for Friends of the Garden Museum), including lunch and tea. gardenmuseum.org.uk
- Book now for a one-day course on how to design a prairie garden with designer **Juliet Sargeant**. The course, which covers ideas for gardens large and small, is in the inspiring setting of Sussex Prairie Garden, Henfield. 9 September, 10.30am-2pm. £65 (£52 for RHS members). Tel 07934 496118, julietdesigns.co.uk

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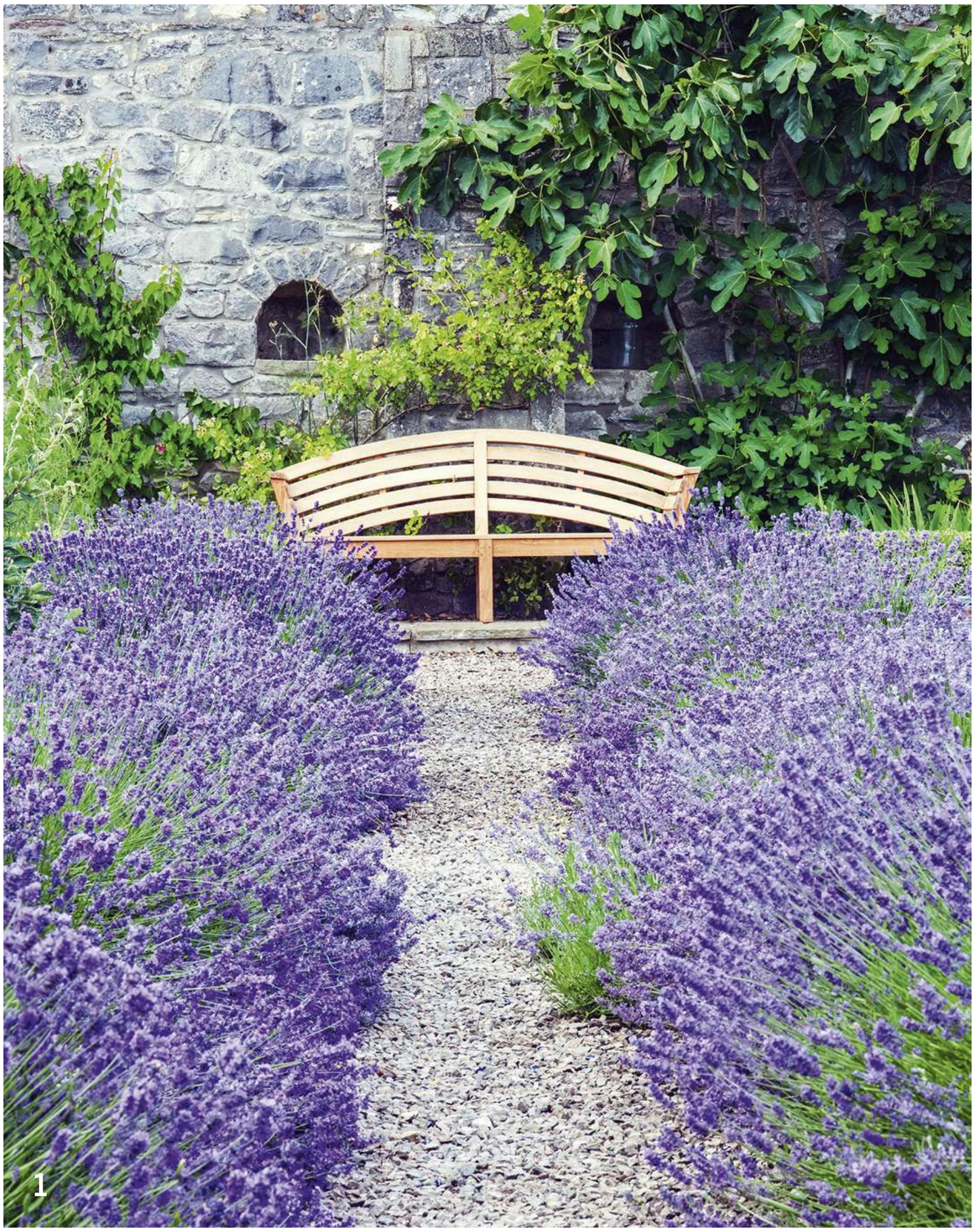
GARDEN REQUISITES

1 Scented seat

The bench must serve more than one purpose. In this garden by Stella Caws, it is not just a place to perch and watch the bees teem all over the lavender but a perfect focal point for the end of a path. In time it will be shaded by the parasol leaves of the fig and the world will be a much better place.



1 GAP PHOTOS / CHARLES HAWES, DESIGN: STELLA CAWS

James Alexander-Sinclair is a garden designer, writer, broadcaster and founder of into-gardens.com. He has served on the RHS Council for the past five years.

Sitting pretty

At their best benches should represent the perfect fusion of form and function – not only somewhere to sit and while away an hour or two, but also sculptural pieces in their own right

WORDS JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR

2 MARIANNE MAJERUS GARDEN IMAGES, RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2009; 3 HAY; 4 GREEN OAK FURNITURE

2 Ahead of the curve

The first time I sat on a Gaze Burvill bench I found it so comforting to both buttocks and spirit that I have sought them out ever since. Made of cleverly steamed oak they are as solid and dependable as chunky-cut marmalade on a wet morning. This one is on one of its RHS Chelsea Flower Show stands.

3 Sleek style

Of course benches do not have to be wooden. This is a sleekly lined steel number with wide bands – often if the strips are too thin then they dig in and are not only uncomfortable but also cause unsightly striations to the posterior. This is designed by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec for the Danish company, Hay.

4 Staying put

This is a very sculptural piece by Chris Nangle for Green Oak Furniture. If you need to move a bench around the place as occasional seating then this may not be the wisest choice. It is a hefty chunk of charred green oak that will age stylishly and look amazing especially in front of a landscape where the waves will mimic the distant hills.

I have a life-changing theory about garden benches – this may be a slight exaggeration especially if compared to the pantheon of post-Aristotelian philosophy but bear with me… We all, no matter if we garden rolling acres and swooping valleys or an inner city postage stamp, have various seats scattered across our gardens. The intentions behind all these chairs and benches is so that we can spend time relaxing and admiring the scenery.

However, the reality is that none of us actually spend much time sitting on the things, mostly we just look at them. This is not because we lack the desire to sit down, it is simply because, firstly, the weather means that for about 232 days in any year they are too damp or the temperature too inclement. The second reason is that, as gardeners, we are easily distracted from sitting by the appearance of urgent bit of pruning that we can see in our peripheral vision. Therefore – and this is where the theory comes in – we should make sure that any seat we own should not only be comfortable but also beautiful. That bench is not just a bench, it is also a sculpture and therefore is one of the few occasions when function can be allowed to follow form.

Fortunately this is quite an easy goal as there is an enormous range of garden furniture available to us from timber to stone and from corian to Corten steel (although I would not recommend sitting on the latter while wearing white trousers – especially after a rain shower). There are waterproof bean bags, director's chairs, thrones, stools, hammocks, settles and frankly precarious café chairs. So the world is, to quote the great Arthur Daley, your lobster when it comes to choice. However, it would be wise to make sure that the style of the seat suits the general feel of

▷

5 Height of design

Even though it has only been there for the blink of an eye the New York High Line has become an instantly recognisable garden. Not just because of the views of the city and the sensational Piet Oudolf planting but also because of the distinctive rising benches that pop out of the ground with such poise.

6 Divided passions

This is called the Romeo and Juliet bench as the trees are destined not to touch: which seems a little misguided considering what R & J got up before all the lark and nightingale stuff. Nevertheless it is a clever thing with the trees' containers doing most of the heavy lifting. They are modular so you can easily extend the run.

7 Coming up roses

This clever twist on the classic tree seat from RaymentWire has a sprung metal seat and a skeletal umbrella above into which you can weave your chosen climber. This is obviously a gorgeous rose but if you wanted something a little less hazardous then it would work well with *Wisteria*, *Clematis* or a finely scented *Trachelospermum*.

5

6

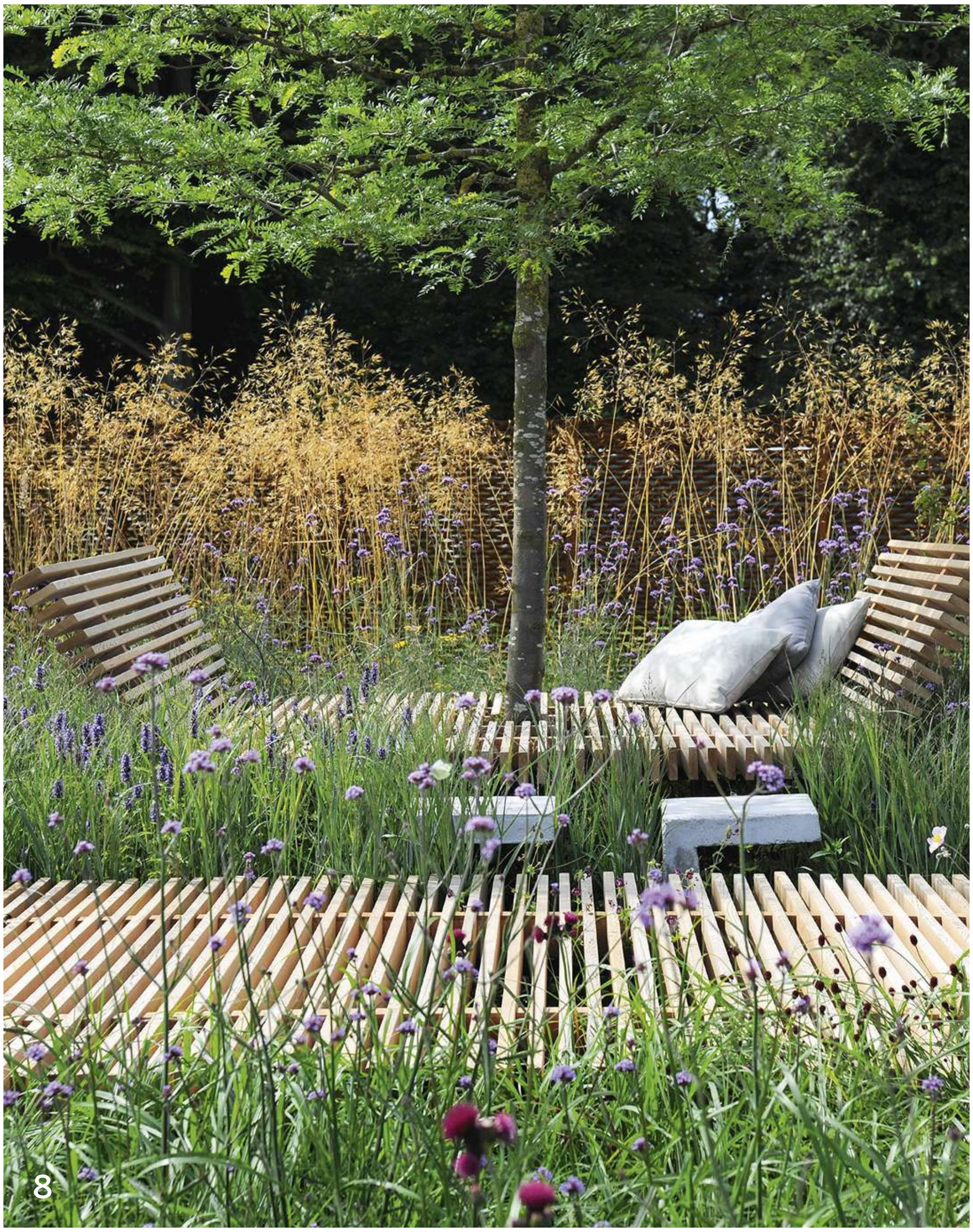
7

5 TERRAMAI.COM; 6 MODERN GARDEN; 7 RAYMENT WIRE, JACQUIE GORDON GARDEN DESIGN

▷ your garden – it does not mean that a traditional garden need only have teak benches but you don't want them to look out of place. Pay attention to colours and textures and, ideally, comfort for the precious moments when you actually use the thing. Some seats have hard edges that dig into the less squishy parts of our anatomies so try before you buy.

Taking my little theory to a further point then, we need to make sure that this chair/sculpture is placed to its best advantage. Obviously it should be somewhere with a decent view, somewhere worth the effort. This can be anything from a distant vista to a dingle inside a border – I always maintain that the best place to sit is always in a flower bed so wrapping the planting around your seat is always effective. Another thing of which you should be aware is that the view back towards your house is often as interesting as the view from the house – sometimes much more so as looking at your own dirty windows is infinitely preferable to looking at someone else's. It is relatively easy to experiment with a bench as they are usually easily moved but, to save a bit of time and swearing, I find that walking around the garden with a chair and trying out options is always time well spent. Make sure that you leave no viewpoint unexplored and that there are both sun baked and shady seats as there is the odd day during summer when you want to be out of the glare.

Humankind in repose is generally quite a lazy species so beware of anything that involves too much effort on behalf of your client – or yourself. Do not put your table and chairs too far away from the kitchen – nobody wants to have to carry heavy trays and laden salad bowls all the way across a lawn, up some



8 THE GARDEN COLLECTION / FP / UTE KLAPHAKE

8 Rising star

A very clever bit of design from Sam Ovens for his The Sky's the Limit garden at the RHS Show Tatton Park in 2014. The seating rises from a bed of ornamental grasses like islands in a restless sea and is accessible from stepping stones. Undoubtedly one for the nimble, but what a perfect place to rest. Bring cushions, though, as the square timbers may be a bit sharp.

Suppliers

- **Barlow Tyrie** teak.com
- **Gaze Burvill** gazeburvill.com
- **Green Oak Furniture** greenoakfurniture.net
- **Greenfingers** For a good range of budget garden furniture try greenfingers.com
- **Habitat** has a range of simple concrete garden furniture. habitat.co.uk
- **Hay** hay.dk
- **The Modern Garden Company** holds a good selection of furniture from many designers and are a good one-stop shop. moderngardencompany.com
- **RaymentWire** metal garden benches. raymentwire.com
- **TerraMai** reclaimed teak. terramai.com

stairs and around a pond. There is always a place for a a distant chair gazing over a perfect valley but try and make sure that is on a frequently used path rather than a neglected cul de sac.

In this, as in so many things in gardens, we are spoilt for choice and have to edit carefully as few of us have enough space to indulge our every whim. Personally, I like a swinging chair – hammocks are a bit precarious and lose whatever romantic promise they may have had when you get to my age – but a gently swaying cushioned bench, maybe in a verandah or under a canopy is a wonderful thing and the perfect place to sleep off lunch or pass a peaceful morning. If, that is you can resist getting up at frequent intervals because you have just spotted an errant weed or a bit of deadheading that cannot wait a moment longer. □

Further information

- The landscape architect Michael Balston wrote an excellent book *The Well-Furnished Garden* (Mitchell Beazley, 1990). Sadly no longer in print but worth hunting down a second-hand copy if you can.
- If you want to make your own furniture then consult *Making Garden Furniture from Wood* by Anthony Hontoir (Crowood Press, 2005).
- Wooden furniture will usually age to a disguised silvery grey but every so often it will benefit from a rub down with a wire brush (not too coarse) and sand paper to remove dirt and bird poo. After this a coat of oil (teak or Danish) would be a good idea, think of it as moisturising to keep them looking fresh for longer.
- Make sure that none of your wooden furniture is standing in water – no matter how tough the wood it will rot over time.

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Education GUIDE

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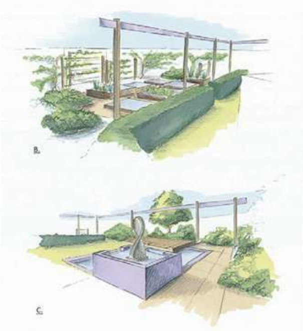

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GARDEN MASTERCLASS

Garden designer Annie Guilfoyle and horticulturist, writer and researcher Noel Kingsbury have joined forces to create Garden Masterclass.

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Tuesday 1 Aug – **Extending Late Summer & Autumn Interest in the Garden** Marina Christopher & Tom Brown at Parham House & Gardens, West Sussex

Tuesday 15 Aug – **Getting to Grips with Perennials** Rosy Hardy & Ursula Cholmeley at Easton Walled Garden, Lincolnshire

Wednesday 20 Sept – **Scottish Gardens Looking Forward** James Alexander-Sinclair at The Restoration Yard, Edinburgh

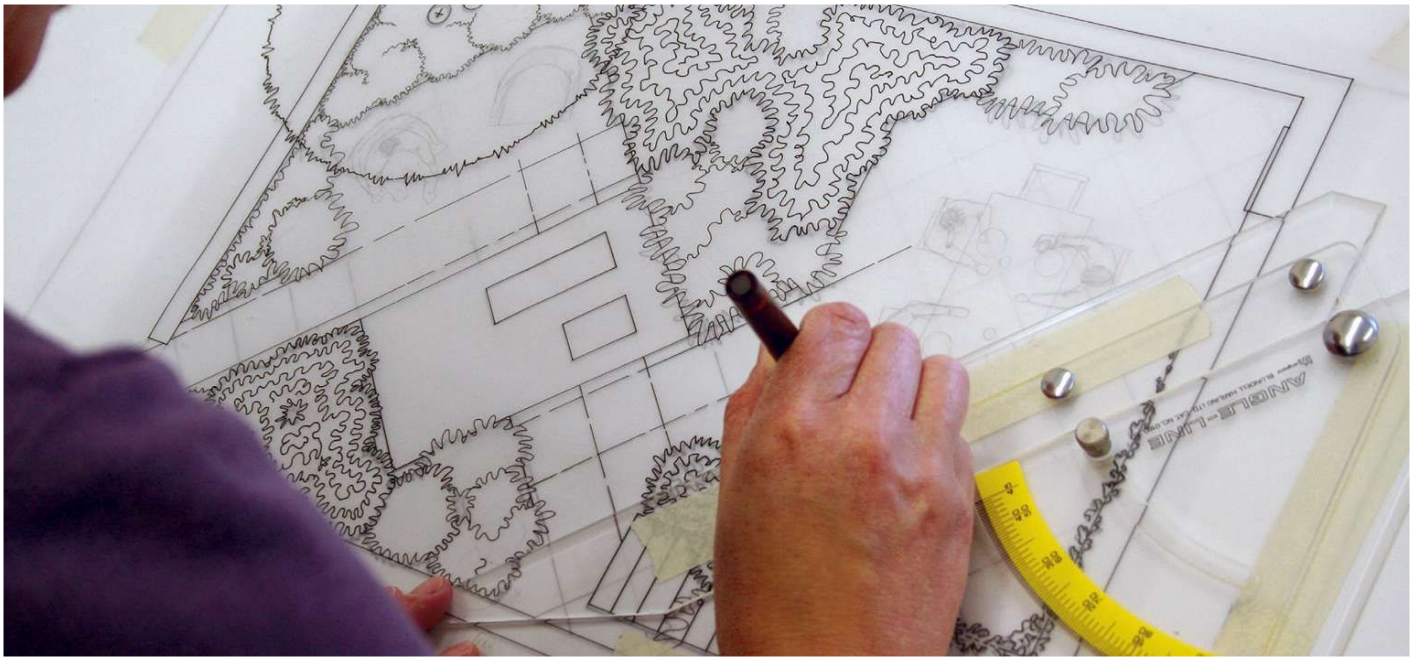
Monday 9 Oct – **In the Mind's Eye – a garden design workshop** Sarah Eberle at Bury Court, Hampshire

Wednesday 11 Oct – **What makes a successful garden?** Annie Guilfoyle & Ursula Cholmeley at Easton Walled Garden, Lincolnshire

Thursday 12 Oct – **The Immersive Experience, dynamic planting design** Nigel Dunnett at Scampston Walled Garden, Yorkshire

Contact details

Web gardenmasterclass.org **Email** gardenmasterclass@gmail.com



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Every designer needs to keep up with current trends and especially new materials and methods. Our Info Burst seasons bring together experts from across the design, landscaping and plant worlds. Based at Regent's University in central London, the seminars are held in the evening and offer bite-sized bursts of information to help you keep up to date.

We also offer short courses in conjunction with the Royal Horticultural Society at RHS Garden Wisley. Each course concentrates on a specific element of garden design and is suitable for both professionals and the amateur enthusiast. For more information please visit our website or contact our administration office on 01483 762955.

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RHS Qualifications cover a range of subjects from propagation to plant health and garden planning to maintenance. They're delivered on a part-time basis at RHS approved centres nationwide. Visit our website for more information and to find your nearest centre.

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The Plant School has won several awards at RHS Chelsea and Hampton Court Flower Shows for its exhibits. Come and meet course directors at The Plant School stand at either of those shows in 2017.

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THE PLANT SCHOOL

Student Profile:

WILL WILLIAMS, LONDON COLLEGE OF GARDEN DESIGN

Why did you choose to do a garden design course?

I had previously studied horticulture so when I finished my course I decided that I wanted to learn more about the design side and applied to study at the London College of Garden Design.

How did you choose your place of study?

I looked at a few options, all at various price ranges. But I really want to make a career of garden design and decided to invest in my future with the course that would set me up for a professional career.

What part of the course has been the most rewarding?

Learning to think in three dimensions, not just for structural design, but for an approach to planting design that I never realised was possible.

How has doing the course changed your career options – or perhaps even your life?

After completion of the course, I felt that I had the confidence and knowledge to set up my own practice, this has been a huge success. I've collaborated on an exhibit at Chelsea and completed a show garden at Hampton Court Palace in my first full year, getting a Silver RHS medal. Without the course, I wouldn't be where I am today.

Student Profile:

HANNAH SCHLOTTER, CAPEL MANOR COLLEGE

How did you choose your course?

I chose to do a Diploma in Horticulture because I knew I was just touching the surface of plant knowledge and science and I was thirsty to know more. I was already volunteering on a market garden, but I wanted to deepen and broaden my horticultural knowledge to improve my confidence and chances of getting paid work in the field.

What do you love most about the course?

The most rewarding part of the course was gaining so much new knowledge through all of the research done for our assignments. I now see the world in a new way, and it takes me longer to walk anywhere because I'm busy identifying what plants are growing in all of the front gardens.

How has the course changed your career?

It's opened up a world of new networks to me. I successfully applied for a David Colegrave Foundation scholarship and started a YouTube channel called Hannah Grows. I'm now an Ambassador for Grow Wild and have presented gardening features for Channel 4. It's also helped me land my dream job teaching the local community how to grow and cook organic food.

Any tips you would give to someone considering a career in horticulture?

My tip would be to supplement your education with practical experience, be it growing plants at home or volunteering in larger gardens. I found it helped to cement the theory when I was putting it into action.

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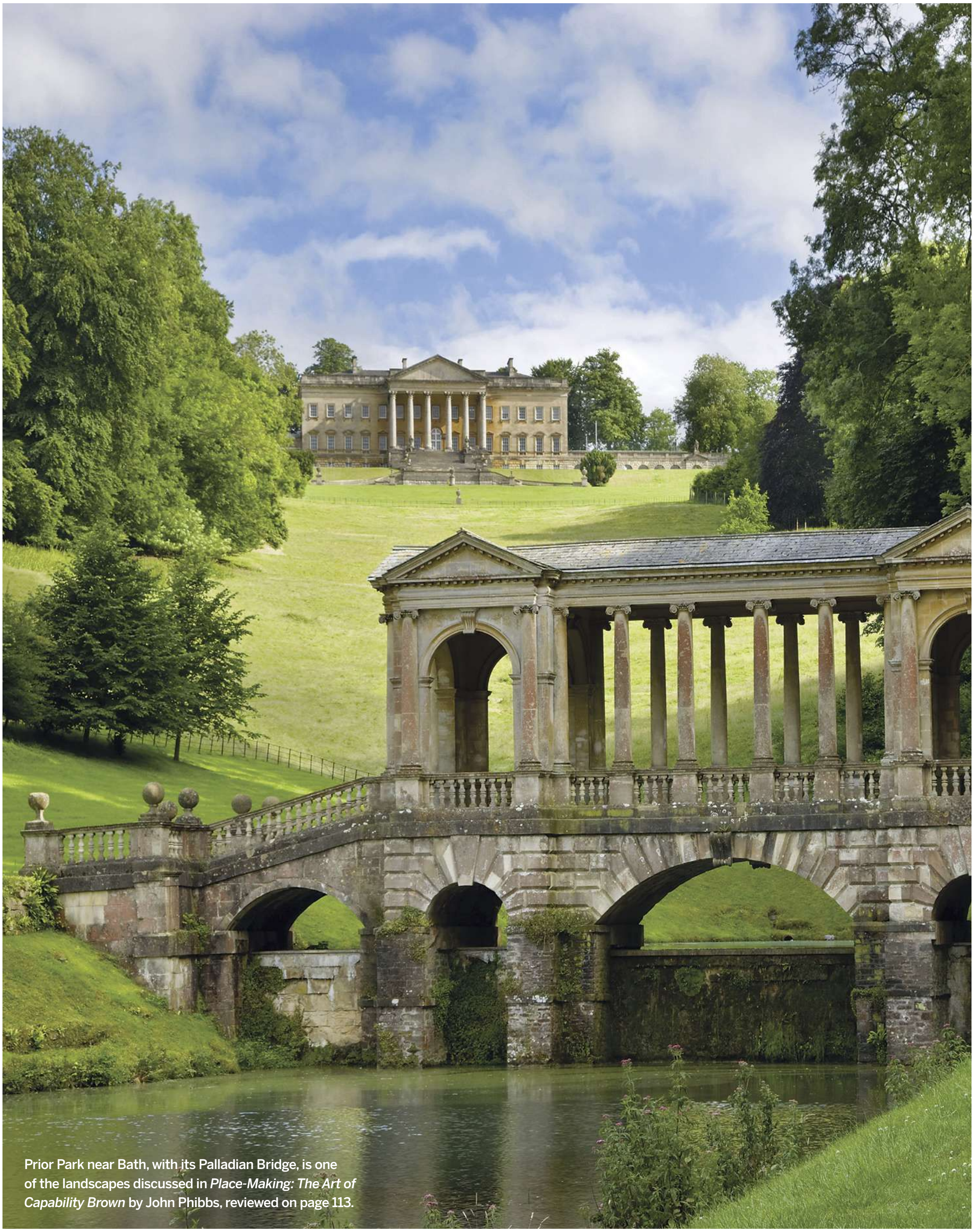
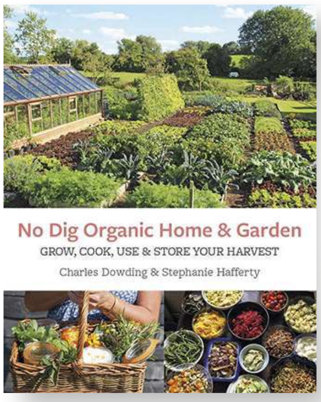
Book reviews, crossword, back issues



Prior Park near Bath, with its Palladian Bridge, is one of the landscapes discussed in *Place-Making: The Art of Capability Brown* by John Phibbs, reviewed on page 113.

Book reviews


No Dig Organic Home & Garden
GROW, COOK, USE & STORE YOUR HARVEST
Charles Dowding & Stephanie Hafferty

NO DIG ORGANIC HOME & GARDEN

by Charles Dowding and Stephanie Hafferty
Permanent Publications, £19.95

ISBN 978-1856233019

The no dig method explained, followed by advanced growing ideas and a catalogue of ways to use your produce.

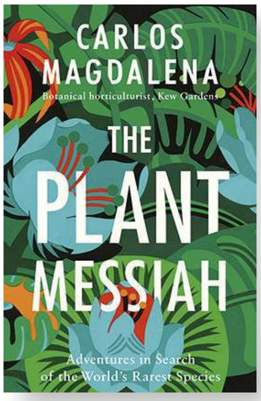
Reviewer Lia Leendertz is a garden writer and blogger.

Charles Dowding is slowly changing the orthodoxy around growing edible crops. His adoption and promotion of the no-dig method is steadily gaining a devoted following because it is simple, logical and it provides good results with minimal work. For the uninitiated: no dig involves disturbing the soil as little as possible, and improving it by laying on thick mulches of organic matter, which are worked into the soil over time by the actions of earthworms. The gardener plants directly into the mulch, and never digs the soil. With a few tweaks it is a method for conquering new ground, killing off weeds, and improving existing beds. Dowding's new book with Stephanie Hafferty explains the theory and method in detail and with characteristic thoroughness.

But no dig is just the starting point of this book and it goes on to cover every possible aspect of growing, cooking and preserving, combining all of Dowding and Hafferty's knowledge, ideas and recipes. There are tables for the best sowing times, required soil temperatures and spacings, plus protection, pests and diseases are covered in detail.

Then there are recipes for using your produce to create DIY potions for the garden – sprays, fertilisers and so on – and for the home – soaps, cleaning solutions and laundry powder – as well as plenty of mouth-watering, vegetable-based recipes.

All of these extras combine to make this more of a manual for self sufficiency and an alternative lifestyle than a straight gardening book, and it is all the more useful and thought provoking for it. It is a brilliant place for a beginner to start and will also give old timers pause to consider doing things in this alternative way.


CARLOS MAGDALENA
Botanical horticulturist, Kew Gardens
THE PLANT MESSIAH
Adventures in Search of the World's Rarest Species

THE PLANT MESSIAH

by Carlos Magdalena
Viking, £16.99

ISBN 978-0241292327

A very readable and gripping account of how a Kew conservationist helped save some of the world's rarest plants.

Reviewer Noel Kingsbury is a garden writer and plantsman.

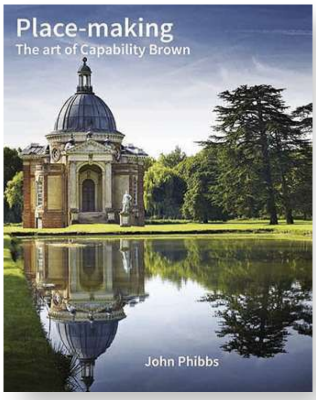
All human, and indeed all animal, life is dependent on plants, and yet most of humanity knows and cares little about them. Carlos Magdalena, a botanical horticulturist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is determined to combat this widespread ignorance. In part this is the story of Magdalena's early life but it's also an eloquent and passionate appeal for us to take more notice of the world's plant life.

He describes his nature-obsessed childhood in Asturias, northwest Spain, and how, through a rather circuitous route, he eventually came to work at Kew. Here, he has focused on the conservation of some of the world's rarest tropical plant species.

Much of the book is taken up with stories of how he has been involved in the 'rescue' of species on the very brink of extinction. Many of the tales concern working out how to propagate these endangered plants – either by trying to make cuttings take root or to encourage almost-impossible-to-germinate seeds to sprout and persuade highly strung seedlings to flourish. Ideally, these successfully propagated plants should be returned to their native habitats, but according to Magdalena, this is often hindered by battles with bureaucracy or local incomprehension or sometimes even cyclones.

Interwoven with these stories is plenty of well-explained plant science about the intricacies of pollination mechanisms, taxonomy and the interdependence of plants and animals.

For anyone looking for a quick introduction to what goes on at Kew, and its incredible importance, this book is a good start. But perhaps too much of its focus is on the daring-do side of what is mostly very methodical and unromantic work.


Place-making
The art of Capability Brown
John Phibbs

PLACE-MAKING: THE ART OF CAPABILITY BROWN

by John Phibbs
Historic England, £60

ISBN 978-1848023567

Definitive study of Britain's most celebrated landscape designer by one of the leading authorities on Brown's work.

Reviewer Tim Richardson is a garden critic and regular columnist.

John Phibbs is a landscape consultant who has been practically involved in scores of landscape-garden restorations. In this eagerly awaited book he shows that for Brown to be as successful as he was he had to reassure his mainly Whiggish clients that his plans were not just pretty, but profitable too.

The opening chapters are essentially a survey of 18th-century estate management, in which every 'Brownian' feature is shown to have an economic value. So we learn that the rolling pasture we associate with places such as Petworth and Blenheim was also a factory for the production of hay, which was used to feed the horses. (Hay, Phibbs explains, was the petrol of its day.) The management of deer herds, woodland and lakes – all of which are key to the Brown aesthetic – are also placed in this economic context. We begin to understand a Brownian estate as a jigsaw of agricultural amenities presented in an all-embracing landscape aesthetic.

The underlying geometry of Brown's designs is described, with Phibbs advancing his 'point-blank' theory: the idea that Brown would place large trees right in front of the house to encourage diagonal or lateral views.

This book made me understand that the key to Brown's skill lay not in what he added to an estate but how he ordered and connected its existing features and topography. His initial survey and plan was always the key and in most cases Brown came up with the answer on his very first visit, riding to the highest point on the estate and surveying the scene. Everything else was detail.

This is not a particularly attractive book by today's standards, but it is nevertheless set to become *the* standard work on our most celebrated landscape designer.

Other books

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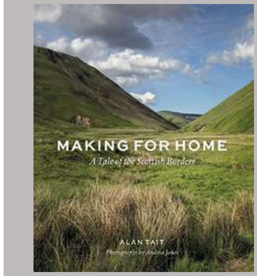
MAKING FOR HOME
A Tale of the Scottish Borders
ALAN TAIT

MAKING FOR HOME: A TALE OF THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

by Alan Tait
Pimpernell Press, £30
ISBN 978-1910258835
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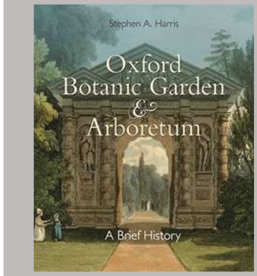
HOW NOT TO KILL YOUR PLANTS
NIK SOUTHERN

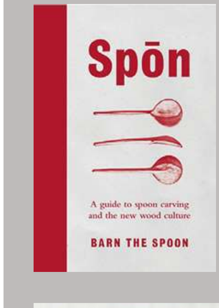
HOW NOT TO KILL YOUR PLANTS

by Nik Southern
Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99
ISBN 978-1473651128
A fun, informative guide to keeping your house plants alive.


Stephen A. Harris
Oxford Botanic Garden & Arboretum
A Brief History

OXFORD BOTANIC GARDEN & ARBORETUM: A BRIEF HISTORY

by Stephen A Harris
Bodleian Library, £14.99
ISBN 978-1851244652
The story of the oldest surviving botanic garden in Britain.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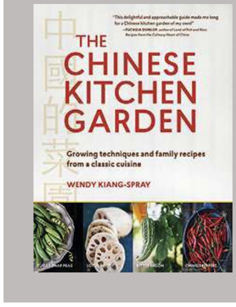
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Growing techniques and family recipes from a classic cuisine
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Summer gardens to visit

This summer, make time to visit this collection of stunning gardens and arboretums across Europe

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Lublé, Loire valley, France
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Web **loire-valley-gardens.com**

2 CHISWICK HOUSE AND GARDENS TRUST

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3 WOBURN ABBEY & GARDENS

Woburn Abbey Gardens come alive in the summer. The herbaceous borders are known as 'the fireworks of the garden' with all their colour. Take a wander along the Long Borders and take in the beautiful colours and smells from a variety of blooms. Spot some of the bees and butterflies who are particularly attracted to this part of the gardens at this time of year.

Address **Woburn, Bedfordshire MK17 9WA**
Tel **01525 290333** Web **woburnabbey.co.uk/gardenshow**

4 HADDON HALL

Described as one of the most romantic houses in Britain, Haddon Hall's gardens overlook the River Wye in Bakewell. Arranged as a series of terraces, over the last few years the gardens have been designed by Chelsea award winner Arne Maynard and are renowned for their incredible array of roses, filling the garden with colour and fragrance.

Address **Haddon Hall, Bakewell,**
Derbyshire DE45 1LA
Tel **01629 812855**
Web **haddonhall.co.uk**

5 THE BISHOPS PALACE & GARDENS

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Address **Off Market Place, Wells,**
Somerset BA5 2PD
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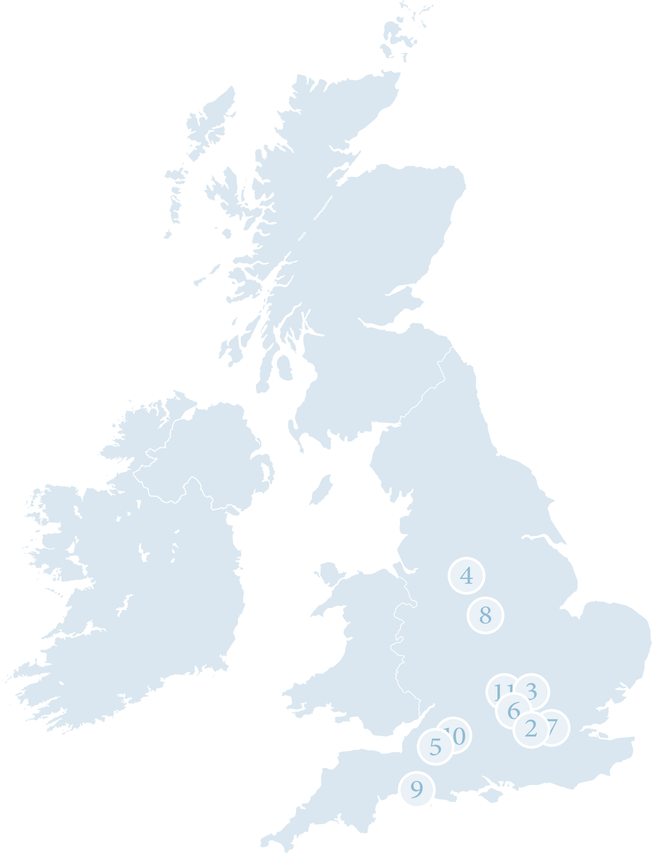
Web **bishopspalace.org.uk**

6 CHENIES MANOR

Chenies Manor House, built in 1460 is set in award-winning gardens that were recently voted as one of Alan Titchmarsh's favourite Jane Austin related gardens 2017. They include a physic garden, kitchen garden and Yew Maze. Hosting an annual Dahlia Festival featuring hundreds of different cultivars throughout the garden. Visit the website for a detailed list of events.

Address **Chenies, Buckinghamshire WD3 6EP**
Tel **01494 762 888.** Web **cheniesmanorhouse.co.uk**



7 HAM HOUSE & GARDEN

The kitchen garden at Ham House is celebrating over 300 years of English salad this summer. You are invited to see, learn about and taste the leaves, buds, roots, shoots and flowers – over 35 ingredients – that would have made up the 17th century's dining 'showstopper', the grand salad.

Address **Ham St, Richmond-upon-Thames, Surrey TW10 7RS**
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Web **nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house-and-garden**

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Address **Bullers Way, Abbotsbury, Dorset DT3 4LA**
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10 BOWOOD HOUSE & GARDENS

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Address **Derry Hill, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 9PQ**
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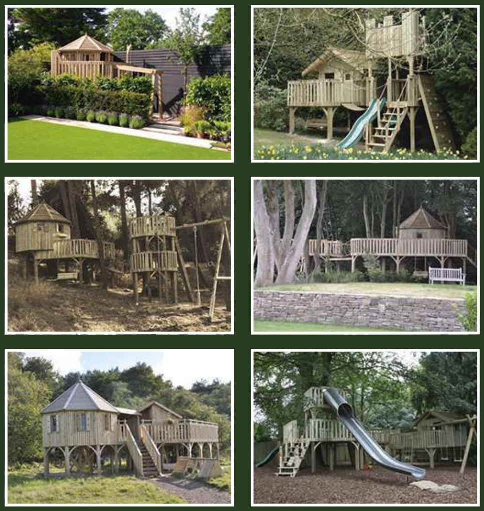

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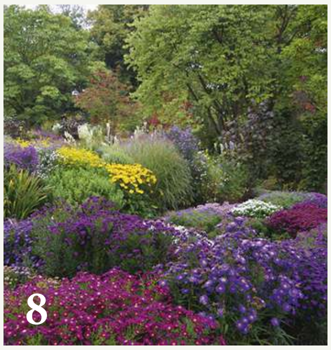

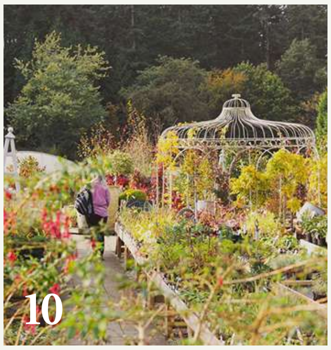

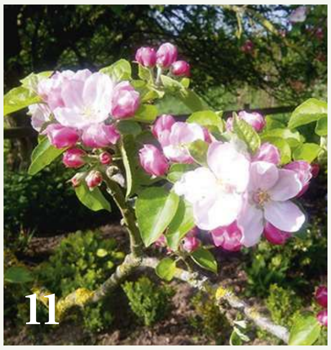

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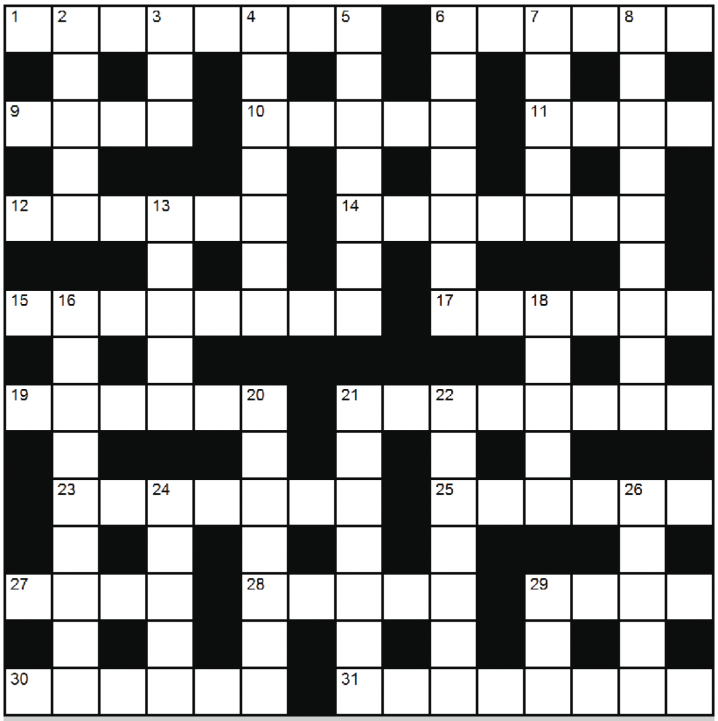

ACROSS

1 Which is close to Granny Smith's heart? (5,3)

6 Sort of hearty taste attributed to root vegetables (6)

9 A stinger, but not a nettle (4)

10 Caraway genus – California spirit (5)

11 Beauty spot? Not good for your lawn! (4)

12 Species of spring crocus, right, held by love goddess (6)

14 Another name for chicory / witloof (7)

15 Earth loved by ericaceous plants (4,4)

17 Thin… courgette with new top (6)

19 Talisman includes the water plantain genus (6)

21 Common name for *Mandragora* – gets Karen mad! (8)

23 Where you might find budding gardeners? (7)

25 Minute sap-sucker – stumbles round end of bough (6)

27 Greyish-brown good manure (4)

28 Egg-shaped, like lemon balm leaves (5)

29 Bearded iris has pendant __ petals (4)

30 Spike-like inflorescence – in terrace melissa (6)

31 Tall, apricot-orange tulip provides a reverie (8)

DOWN

2 Deciduous tree, common in London – sounds rather ordinary (5)

3 Flower's labellum (3)

4 20th-century artist's popular main crop potato (7)

5 Type of edible mushroom – a source of shade (7)

6 Genus of plant in poppy family makes one come around (7)

7 Large-flowered primrose and movie action man (5)

8 Plant in *Alcea* genus – product of prickly shrub and white wine (9)

13 Where leaves attach to stems (5)

16 Genus of marigold Alan clued anagrammatically! (9)

18 Less common in summer are robins (5)

20 Woodland flower also called pasque flower (7)

21 Garden designer, Chelsea gold-medallist, Arne ___ (and Mary, perhaps) (7)

22 Orchard of hazel, etc? (7)

24 A plant that's varied from the standard (5)

26 Partly compile another… genus of plants in nettle family (5)

29 Tree of eg *Picea* genus (3)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

JULY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Clary **4** Sorbus **9** Toto **10** Round **11** Gael **12** Seed coat **13** Oxford **15** Pieris **17** Redworm **19** Kestrel **21** Peapod **22** Lilacs **24** Bud blast **26** Musa **28** Basil **29** Chit **30** Aphids **31** Style.
DOWN 1 Clove pink **2** Aroid **3** Yarrows **5** Old wood **6** Bug **7** Shear **8** Butterfly Bush **14** Flora **16** Rosea **18** Moonshine **20** Rosebud **21** Puddles **23** Inula **25** Lacey **27** Ash.

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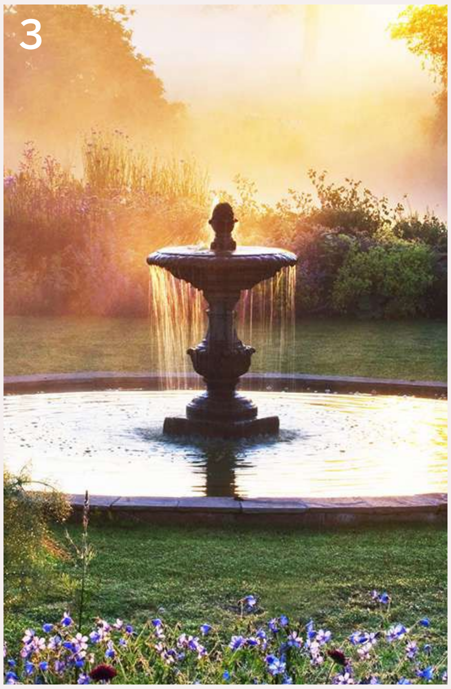
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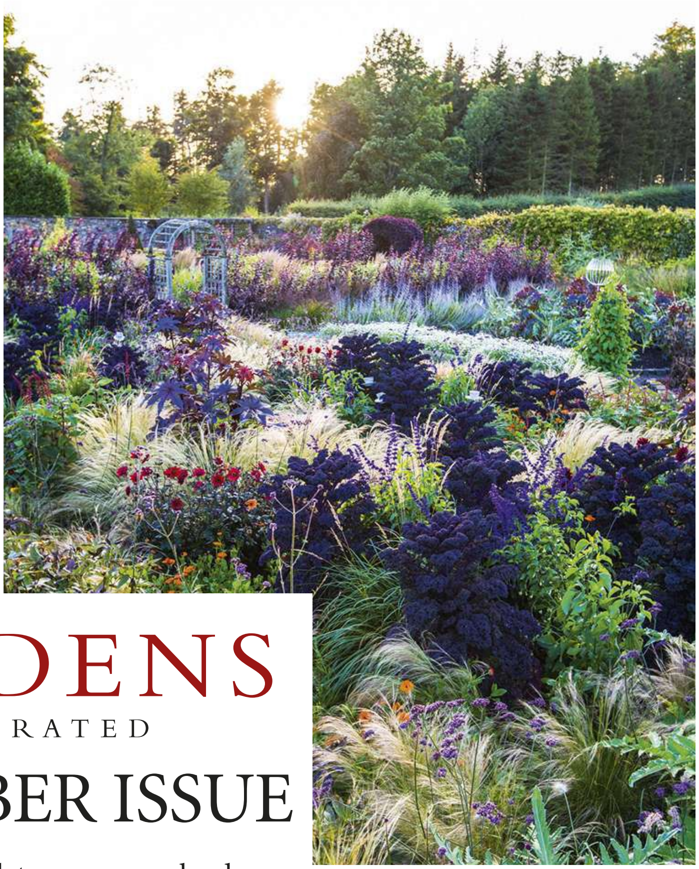

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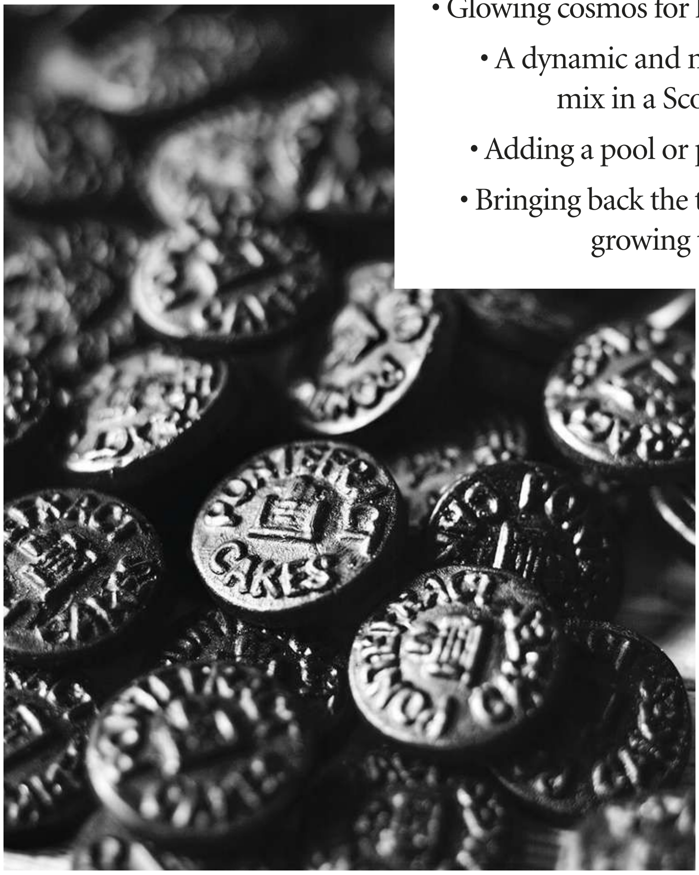
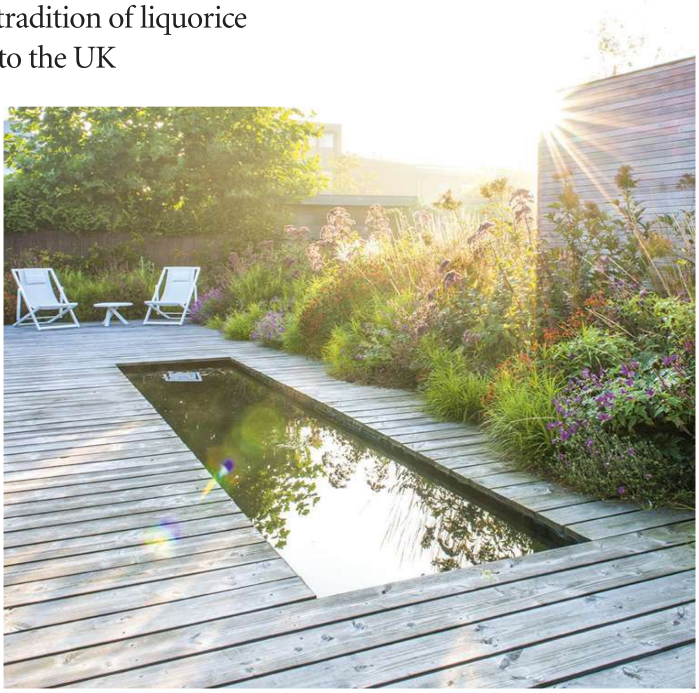
SEPTEMBER ISSUE

- Glowing cosmos for late summer splendour
- A dynamic and naturalistic planting mix in a Scottish garden
- Adding a pool or pond to your garden
- Bringing back the tradition of liquorice growing to the UK





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Happy days

Home at last in Worcestershire, Frank is seeking his garden's forgiveness for time spent away, but rejoicing in the tiny pleasures reworking this familiar earth brings

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **CELIA HART**

The garden is a lure for happiness. For long years I was happy here, without thinking much about why, or even what happiness consisted of. Then I turned my back on it: for all sorts of practical reasons I had no choice, though I knew, when I went, that a golden age was over. In mitigation, the one condition of going was that this garden would be kept, untenanted, to return to as often as possible. The visits, though full of joy, were not happy. You cannot be happy in the presence of something you have betrayed.

So now I am craving this garden's forgiveness, hoping that once again it will consent to be my lure. There is work to be done; daunting work; more daunting than when the garden was begun because then I had a clean slate and now the essence must be preserved. The labour might be seen as a penance, but really it is the first and easiest way to become happy again. When your knees ache and your fingers bleed and you have done enough to see where you have been, the physical satisfaction of that is as good a foundation for happiness as anything.

Because happiness, in general, does not come from doing things for yourself, but in striving for the happiness of another. And if the other is a plant, so much the better, because a plant can never betray you. It might sicken or die, or become rampant and seek to eliminate other plants, but it can never deceive, or misrepresent you to another. Furthermore, the things that do go wrong really are, ultimately, your fault, one way or another. So if you make a plant happy, though you might never admit to taking the credit, the credit is yours none the less. And so, by virtue of your selflessness, the second layer of happiness is laid upon you without you knowing it.

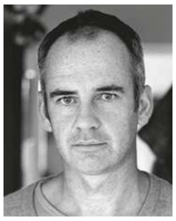
> *Happiness is no right, but an elusive privilege; it cannot be commoditised or traded or demanded. If you chase it, it will run*

Where there is always something useful to be done, and where there are infinite good reasons to stop doing and look for a few moments; where the distractions and the chores are part of the same thing; where you must concentrate and can let your mind wander at the same time; where every task is about the pulse of life itself, how can happiness resist slipping in, unannounced?

Then, this contentment established, the garden begins to throw nice surprises your way. Here is where the lost and the dead reappear sometimes, which is what our happiest dreams are made of. Here is where a thing that failed you all the time you knew it will suddenly and with a flourish give you more than you had ever hoped for. Here a scent will catch you sometimes and take you back through locked doors. Here is the one place you know that life is worth the effort.

The tiny pleasures build, like knowing the names; names that would not come to your tongue if another was there and they asked you. That, in turn, then is part of the pleasure of being alone in the garden, without another to impede your hearing or your memory; without the sound of your own voice explaining to drown your thoughts.

I am back and I must be patient, and let the garden forgive me and become the lure again. I know for certain, having lived in that country where the pursuit of happiness is written into the constitution, that happiness must never be pursued. That idea is the greatest of all the disservices that culture has inflicted on humanity. Happiness is no right, but an elusive privilege; it cannot be commoditised or traded or demanded. If you chase it, it will run. Your only chance of knowing it is to be still and let it come to the lure. The stiller you are the more it will linger. Any attempt to run after it and capture it, or even too direct a stare, and it will flit off like a goldfinch startled. □



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire.

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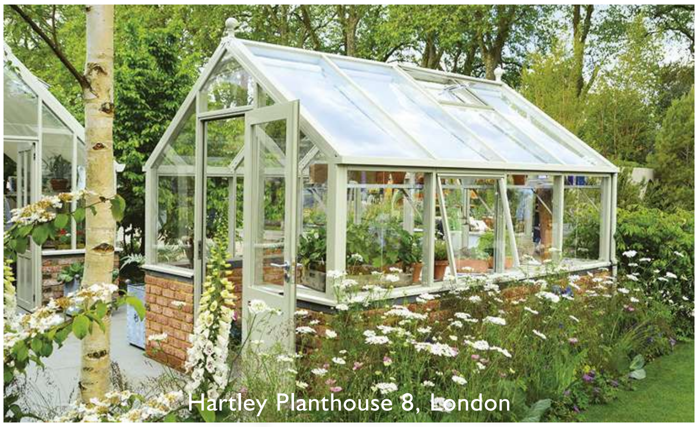

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